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ABSTRACT

This guide addresses provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), including rights, roles, and responsibilities that offer parents and community leaders voice in public education. The guide highlights ways to use the NCLB to strengthen public voice and increase community and parental involvement in school- and district-level operations and decisions; identifies areas of NCLB that require or provide for community and/or parental involvement in Title I and Title II; describes the scope and requirements for each area of community and parental engagement; translates legislative language into understandable terms, recommending actions for parents and/or communities; provides a formatted training tool for parent-teacher and town meetings; and identifies areas in the act that are silent about community and/or parent engagement, but where there may be legal loopholes allowing parents and/or communities to exercise leadership and take initiative. Topics include state and local applications; SEA and LEA parental involvement policies; parent-school compacts; SEA and LEA report cards and assessment data; teacher, principal, and paraprofessional quality; parents' right to know; schools identified as needing improvement, corrective action, or restructuring; districts identified as needing improvement and corrective action; language instruction for limited English proficient and immigrant students; and education of homeless students. (SM)

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USING NCLB TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

An Action Guide for Community and Parent Leaders

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Dear Community and Parent Leaders,

No Child Left Behind, in its name, and in its promise, envisions a world in which all students have access to high-quality teaching, aligned curriculum and assessments, and the range of supports students need to succeed. Yet we know that many school districts, especially those with large numbers of low-income and minority children in both rural and urban communities, have a long way to go to realize that vision. Isolated school-reform efforts have met with some success; none, however, have achieved the ultimate goal of sustained achievement for *all* public school children.

Quality public schools depend on quality public engagement and on sustained public involvement. Which is why your leadership, commitment, and effort are so important in realizing the goals of *No Child Left Behind*. This guide provides a source of reference to the act and particularly to those areas of the law where you can have the greatest influence. Most important, the guide proposes ways *No Child Left Behind* can be employed as a catalyst for community action, thus ensuring the act lives up to its noble goals.

Helping you in this endeavor are local education funds—independent community-based advocacy organizations working to engage local citizens in public education reform in urban and rural communities around the country. They all believe that closing the *achievement* gap can be accomplished only by closing the *engagement* gap between communities where schools benefit from high levels of citizen involvement and those where schools struggle in isolation for resources and support.

This guide was created with support from The Annenberg Foundation. In producing the guide, PEN hopes to continue the leadership, vision, and public service exemplified in Ambassador Walter Annenberg's efforts to help tens of thousands of poor and minority children receive a quality public education.

Our children and our public schools need your support. Thank you for getting involved.

Sincerely,

Wendy D. Puriefoy

Wendy D. Puriefoy
President, Public Education Network

Table of Contents

NCLB provides many opportunities for communities and parents to become involved in urging, advocating, and pressuring for quality public schools in their communities and states. Therefore, parents and community leaders should prioritize the areas of the act on which they will focus, based on their own capacity and resources relative to the needs of their schools and school districts.

To help in deciding where to start or where to focus attention, this guide identifies ten major areas of activity, or provisions, of the act. These areas (indicated in bold in the table of contents) can serve as leverage points for you to concentrate your advocacy activities. You can choose one area or a combination of areas to start your work, or to continue involvement in initiatives that are already underway in your state or district. While the act cites many areas for involvement and engagement, this guide concentrates on the areas most important for engaging citizens in supporting quality educational opportunities for all children.

Introduction 5

Effective Collaboration: How Communities and Parents Can Work Together 8

What Can You Do to Make a Difference? 10

State and Local Applications 13

SEA and LEA Parental Involvement Policies 17

Parent/School Compacts 23

SEA and LEA Report Cards and Assessment Data 27

Teacher, Principal, and Paraprofessional Quality 33

Teacher Quality: Parents' Right to Know 37

Schools Identified as Needing Improvement, Corrective Action, or Restructuring 41

School Districts Identified as Needing Improvement and Corrective Action 47

Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students 57

Education of Homeless Students 61

Other Opportunities for Involvement and Action 65

NCLB Programs 69

NCLB Implementation Timeline: Key Action Points 71

Glossary 72

Selected Resources 77

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Purpose of the Guide

This guide addresses the various provisions of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (called NCLB, or the act). Included are specific rights, roles, and responsibilities that offer parents and community leaders opportunities to send the no-nonsense message that unequal educational opportunities will no longer be tolerated in their public schools.

The guide highlights ways NCLB can be used to strengthen the public's voice in education, and to increase community and parental involvement in school-level and district-level operations and decisions:

- Identifies major areas of NCLB that require or provide for community and/or parental involvement in Title I (Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged) and Title II (Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers and Principals) of the act
- Provides general information on the scope and requirements for each major area of community and parental engagement
- Breaks down legislative language into understandable terms and recommends actions that can be taken by parents and/or the community as a result of their rights under the act
- Provides a formatted and easily reproduced training tool for parent/teacher meetings and town meetings
- Identifies areas in the act that are silent about community and/or parental engagement, but where PEN believes openings in the law allow parents and/or the community to exercise leadership and take initiative

Who Should Use This Guide?

This guide is designed for activists and/or leaders of community and parent organizations at both state and local levels. Although NCLB is more specific on the role of parents, the act also identifies many opportunities for community involvement. The guide can assist community leaders as they work their way through these various entry points.

More generally, the guide can be used by parents, community members, educators, business people, seniors, and students who want to know what their roles and responsibilities are under the law, or who want to become more knowledgeable about strategies for public engagement. Community trainers, organizers, and advocates can use the guide as a training or reference tool for town meetings and community dialogues.

Lastly, the guide provides members of the media with an easy-to-understand reference regarding community and parent roles in NCLB. Media coverage of the signature work of communities' and parents sends a clear message to policymakers that they need to provide the resources necessary so that not one child is left behind.

Education-Related Abbreviations

AASA	American Association of School Administrators
AFT	American Federation of Teachers
ASCD	Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
AYP	Adequate yearly progress
CBO	Community-based organization
CCSSO	Council of Chief State School Officers
CRESST	National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing
ECS	Education Commission of the States
ED	US Department of Education
ELL	English language learner
ESEA	*Elementary and Secondary Education Act*
ETS	Educational Testing Service
LEA	Local education agency
LEF	Local education fund
LEP	Limited English proficient
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
NASBE	National Association of State Boards of Education
NCEA	National Coalition of Education Activists
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics
NCLB	*No Child Left Behind Act*
NEA	National Education Association
NPTA	National Parent Teachers Association
NRT	Norm-referenced test
NSBA	National School Board Association
PEN	Public Education Network
SEA	State education agency
TAPs	Targeted assistance programs

Introduction

When *No Child Left Behind* was signed into law on January 8, 2002, the president of the United States and Congress presented the American public with an opportunity and a challenge.

The opportunity rests in a historic piece of education legislation designed to close the achievement gap between high- and low-performing students. The challenge lies in the requirement that leaders of parents and communities become knowledgeable about the law and take advantage of its provisions for action, engagement, and collaboration.

The law is not perfect, and not everyone agrees with all of its provisions. But the law does provide opportunities for parents and communities to become involved, to recommend strategies and activities in state and local plans, and to monitor student achievement based on data. Above all, the law responds in a dramatic way to a national outcry that too many children are being left behind.

The impetus for *No Child Left Behind* rests on a simple premise: With timely, concise, understandable information about gaps in student achievement, the public will hold educators, policymakers, elected officials, parents, and itself accountable for raising the level of education. This is democracy at work—from convening community leaders to working with the media, from contacting elected officials to serving on Title I planning committees, *No Child Left Behind* calls us all to action.

What Is the *No Child Left Behind Act?*

Building on the 1994 amendments to the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, NCLB will affect every state and public school district in the country beginning with the 2002–2003 school year. More than 90 percent of America's school districts receive funding for more than 40 federal educational and supportive services programs covered by the act. The wide range of services supports before- and after-school programs, family literacy, parenting classes, library materials, technology services, educating migrant children, and safe and drug-free schools. Of the nine titles in the act, Titles I and II are the largest programs, in terms of both requirements and funding. More than 47,000 schools will receive Title I funds for extra academic support for low-income children. All school districts are eligible for Title II funds to train, retain, and recruit qualified teachers, principals, and paraprofessionals.

NCLB allows for parental and community action. Parents can be involved in developing district and school parental involvement policies, and communities must be represented on a state committee of practitioners examining plans and policies for Title I programs. Parents can participate on the school improvement teams that make recommendations regarding areas identified as needing improvement. Parents and community leaders can also push for more school funding—an activity not written into the law, but an implied action if existing funds are insufficient to carry out mandated recommendations of the act.

The main focus of NCLB is to improve the academic achievement of students in low-performing schools around the country. It strives to have every student achieving at a proficient level, as defined by each state, by the 2013–2014 school year. To achieve this objective, the act focuses on the following elements:

- Development of state standards, assessment systems, and accountability measures
- Highly qualified teachers, principals, and paraprofessionals
- Rewards for schools that meet or exceed academic expectations
- Identification of schools that fall behind in progress toward state standards
- Funding for schools that need special assistance to meet NCLB requirements
- Parental and community involvement
- Parental choice and supplemental services

What Are the Provisions of NCLB?

NCLB includes provisions that affect every state and every school district in the country, as well as provisions that affect only Title I schools—i.e., schools with large numbers of children from low-income families that often need additional resources to attain state standards.

NCLB state requirements:

- Have in place for the 2002–2003 school year challenging academic content and achievement standards for all students in reading/language arts and mathematics.
- Have in place by the 2005–2006 school year a state assessment system for annual tests in reading/language arts and mathematics in grades 3–8, and for a single test in grades 10–12.
- Have science standards in place by the beginning of the 2005–2006 school year.
- Assess every student in science, by the 2007–2008 school year, at least once in each of these grade spans: 3–5, 6–9, and 10–12.
- Align state standards with assessments.
- Have all students attain a level of proficiency, as measured by state assessments, by the 2013–2014 school year.
- Provide school districts assistance in developing parental involvement programs for the district and the schools.
- Identify the number of limited English proficient (LEP) students and help develop an English proficiency test if local school districts are unable to do so.
- Develop instructional benchmarks defining the language proficiency LEP students should attain.
- Include LEP students and disabled students in the academic assessments required of all other students.
- Disseminate an annual student performance report card that provides parents and community representatives with comparative statewide information for all local school districts based on state assessments.

NCLB school district requirements:

- Assess every student annually in reading/language arts and mathematics in grades 3–8, and once in grades 10–12, beginning in the 2005–2006 school year.
- Assess LEP students, providing reasonable accommodations in language to yield accurate and reliable information about student progress in meeting state standards.
- Assess disabled students, providing reasonable adaptations and accommodations necessary to measure academic achievement.

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- Assess every student in science in at least one grade of grades 3–5, 6–9, and 10–12 by the 2007–2008 school year.
- Develop a parental involvement policy with input from and the agreement of parents.
- Disseminate an annual student performance report card that provides parents and community representatives with comparative information about performance at the school district and individual school levels, based on state assessments.
- Require all teachers of core academic subjects to be highly qualified by the end of the 2005–2006 school year.
- Require all teachers and paraprofessionals in Title I programs to meet the *highly qualified* standards set by the state, starting with the 2002–2003 school year.
- Identify all Title I schools that fall into *needing improvement, corrective action,* or *restructured* categories; notify parents what those terms mean and what options they have.

NCLB Title I school requirements:

- Inform parents if a school is identified as needing improvement or corrective action or if the school does not meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements. Schools not meeting AYP are subject to a progressive set of corrective actions:
  - No AYP for two consecutive years: Parents can transfer their children to another public school or charter public school not on the list of low-performing schools.
  - No AYP for three consecutive years: Parents can transfer their children to another public school or charter public school not on the list of low-performing schools, or they can select a supplemental service provider for special instructional help for their children after the school day.
  - No AYP for four consecutive years: Parents can transfer their children to another public school or charter public school not on the list of low-performing schools or select a supplemental service provider for special instructional help for their children after the school day. In addition, the school must begin restructuring by replacing staff and centralizing decision making.
  - No AYP for five consecutive years: The school must continue to provide public school choice and supplemental services and to restructure the school. In addition, the state may take over the school or turn management over to a for-profit company.
- If identified for improvement, a school must establish a team of parents and community representatives to develop a plan of action to improve the school. State education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) must provide the school with special instructional services and learning opportunities to help it improve.

Effective Collaboration: How Communities and Parents Can Work Together

Community leaders and parents can use a variety of methods to address public policy issues.

COMMUNITY	PARENTS
Work with parents	Work with the community
Focus on the community and the school district	Focus on classrooms and schools
Educate the public about NCLB	Educate parents about NCLB
Host town meetings and dialogues on critical issues	Make sure *all* parents are included and involved in town meetings
Link community services with parents and schools	Make sure the community is linked with schools and parents
Organize the community to demand quality schools	Participate in district and school decision making
Monitor NCLB implementation	Get involved in developing parental involvement policies
Use data to promote community action around informed decisions	Use data to improve student learning
Provide teachers and parents with professional development and training	Organize parents to demand improvement of low-performing schools
Work with the media to promote understanding of school improvement	Hold elected officials accountable for quality schools

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Community Dialogue:

- Convene people so the broader community can contribute its voice on an issue.
- Voice opinions and influence decisions by serving on review teams, improvement teams, and advisory councils.
- Organize the community and parents on behalf of an important policy issue—a march on the state capital, a petition-writing campaign, building an e-mail network—to bring pressure to bear.
- Organize town meetings and dialogues that bring together cross sections of the community to discuss major barriers to educational achievement, including race, gender, income, and class, as they affect the ability of children to learn.
- Conduct surveys, opinion polls, and focus groups to determine community attitudes, ideas, and priorities.

Advocacy:

- Communicate with elected officials to advocate for policy changes at the local, state, and/or national levels on issues such as school finance disparity, teacher licensure and accreditation alternatives, privatization and vouchers, and smaller class size.
- Monitor the work of school districts and schools, collect data and explain how it affects policy change, and report information on school performance and achievement levels.

Sharing Information:

- Distribute information to build public awareness to bring about change.
- Work with the media to impart important information to the community, announce community action plans, publicize important data about school achievement, and help the press understand complex educational issues.
- Educate the community and provide practical information and research about school improvement strategies to help the broader community create better informed recommendations and opinions.

Building Support:

- Build new relationships among parents, educators, community leaders, business people, representatives of faith-based institutions, experts, researchers, seniors, and students.
- Provide programs and services such as healthcare, before- and after-school programs, preschool, literacy and reading tutorials, drug- and substance-abuse prevention programs, training and skill-building workshops for parents, language translations, and career education opportunities.

What Can You Do to Make a Difference?

Understand NCLB.
Learn how SEAs and school districts are administering and implementing NCLB in state and local school districts. This information makes it easier to understand the terminology of the act and how the various provisions of the act are related. Do not let the complexity and magnitude deter you from becoming a community authority on NCLB. When building the public engagement of parents and communities as well as responsibility for quality public schools, nothing substitutes for expertise about community roles and rights.

Understand how NCLB works in your state.
NCLB covers many programs, and each state administers the act according to the state's needs and available resources relevant to NCLB requirements. Every state has a staff dedicated to ensuring that state programs comply with federal requirements. To locate your state's Title I director, visit www.titlei.com/links.htm; or call the US Department of Education's Office of Compensatory Education Programs at 202 260 0826. The Department of Education's NCLB weblink can be accessed from the Department's homepage at www.ed.gov. For a hard copy of the law, contact the Superintendent of Documents, US Government Printing Office, PO Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15050-7954; or call 866 512 1800; or go to the Government Printing Office website, http://bookstore.gpo.gov, for ordering and pricing information. The full text of NCLB is posted at www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA02/.

Get involved in developing state and local plans.
NCLB requires SEAs, local school districts, and individual schools to submit plans describing how they will use federal money, what the outcomes of their plans will be, and how the planned activities will assist in ensuring quality schools for all children. Federal money is often commingled with other federal funds as well as state and local funds. Information on how funds are allocated and for what purpose is extremely important because this often determines district priorities and focus. Typically, plans are completed at the end of the school year for the following year. Learn about the process for creating or adjusting plans in your local district and schools, and get involved in the decision-making process.

Become an NCLB expert for your district and your school.
In addition to the state plan, each school district and individual school submits a yearly plan for Title I and other titles for which they receive funding. Within each plan, the school district and the individual school must describe how funds will be spent, who must be involved in the planning, how the money relates to school improvement, and what activities the district or school will undertake. Get involved in developing the plans, learn how parents and the community can help implement the plans, and develop the means to hold schools and the district accountable for achieving the outcomes of the plans. Contact the district superintendent or district federal programs coordinator for a list of NCLB programs in your local school district or schools, information on how much money the district and schools receive from NCLB sources, and copies of any school plans.

Get to know the decision makers.
School board members, superintendents, assistant superintendents, Title I coordinators, and principals determine how NCLB funds are spent at the district and school levels. Many districts and local schools also have an advisory committee that provides annual feedback and guidance on various NCLB programs and plans. Meet with these key officials and groups and become part of the decision-making process.

Find common language.
School officials, community leaders, parent organizations, elected officials, and curriculum developers often view public education from a variety of perspectives.

Become familiar with "edu-speak," an alphabet soup of abbreviations such as NCLB, SEA, LEA, AYP, LEP, and NAEP; with legal language and terms such as promulgating rules, administrative guidance, program audits, and compliance requirements; with technical curriculum terms such as best practices, research-based instruction, alignment, whole-language, and standards-based reform; and with assessment terminology such as rubrics, cut scores, norm-referenced tests, validity, accommodations, and alternative assessments.

Meaningful public engagement cannot occur unless the various parties understand each other and use terms that have the same meaning for all parties involved. Developing a glossary (see Glossary, page 72), conducting training to familiarize parents and community representatives with education terms and their meanings, and providing translations to parents who do not speak English proficiently are critical steps in building good communication and understanding.

Watch out for ambiguous terms.
Many sections of NCLB state that programs and activities should be planned and implemented with meaningful "consultation," or that states and school districts are required to do something "to the extent practicable" or "the extent feasible," or that "communication with parents should be conducted in a language and a format that parents can understand." Ask the state and the school district how they interpret these terms. If the language is not defined, it can be used to avoid meaningful communication and parental involvement and could create confusion and misunderstanding among parents, the community, and the school district.

Don't expect this to be easy.
While many states, school districts, and schools value community and parental involvement, others are reluctant to provide partnership opportunities in the school improvement process. While NCLB provides parents and community representatives with the legal authority to become involved, it does not guarantee that the job of organizing and engaging communities and parents will be easy.

Monitor the rules, regulations, and guidance.
The US Department of Education and SEAs will release rules, regulations, and guidance to clarify issues of process, terminology, timing, and policy not addressed in the act as passed by Congress. There should be someone in each community who tracks the rules, regulations, and guidance and disseminates the information to parents and community leaders.

State and Local Applications

Each state and local school district receiving funds under Title I of NCLB must submit a Title I plan developed in consultation with "teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, administrators, and other staff and parents" and must indicate how each level of the school system will support parental involvement.

Parents and community representatives need to be part of this critical planning process. This requirement gives them the opportunity to work with educators to (a) develop a plan that addresses how the SEA, LEA, and individual schools will promote the social, emotional, and academic growth of students, and (b) shape Title I services that include meaningful parental involvement policies and school practices that lead to increased student achievement.

Community Reference

LOCAL

LEA plans must describe how services will be coordinated and integrated with other educational programs such as Even Start, Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, transition from preschool to kindergarten programs, and LEP programs.

For targeted assistance schools, Title I funds can be used to collaborate with local service providers for health, nutrition, and other services if no other public or private resources are available to cover those costs.

STATE

SEAs must appoint parents, teachers, LEA representatives, and others familiar with educational standards, assessments, accountability, and the needs of low-performing schools to the peer-review committee that reviews the SEA plan before it is submitted to the US secretary of education for approval.

Parent Reference

LOCAL

LEA plans must provide for parental input and participation as follows:

- Must be developed in consultation with parents of children in schools with Title I programs, along with teachers, principals, administrators, and other appropriate school personnel
- Must describe strategies to implement effective parental involvement
- Must describe how teachers and the school, in consultation with parents, will identify eligible children most in need of Title I services (for targeted assistance schools, see targeted assistance programs in Glossary, page 76)
- Must submit parents' comments when the plan goes to the state for approval, if Title I parents are not satisfied with the plan

School plans must provide for parental input and participation as follows:

- Must describe ways the school district will inform parents, teachers, and students about student progress in achieving state standards and, in consultation with parents, ways to identify students most in need of special services
- Must describe LEA parental involvement policies and programs, how the district will provide technical assistance to support parental involvement programs, and how parental involvement programs will be coordinated with Even Start, Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, transition from preschool to kindergarten programs, and LEP programs
- Must describe how the school will disseminate school and district parental involvement policies
- Must describe how services will be coordinated and integrated with other educational programs such as Even Start, Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, transition from preschool to kindergarten programs, and LEP programs

Note: Targeted assistance schools can use Title I funds to collaborate with local service providers of health, nutrition, and other services if no other public or private resources are available to cover those costs.

STATE

SEA plans must provide for parental input and participation as follows:

- Must be developed in consultation with parents
- Must incorporate a peer-review process that includes parents, teachers, LEA representatives, and others familiar with educational standards, assessments, accountability, and the needs of low-performing schools
- Must describe how the state will support the collection and dissemination of information about effective parental involvement practices to LEAs and schools
- Must provide for an annual review of each LEA receiving Title I funds to determine compliance with parental involvement, school improvement, and teacher qualification provisions; must include parents on the committee of practitioners advising the state on implementing Title I requirements

Action Opportunities for Community Leaders

- Work with the SEA to develop parental involvement policies that include linking schools and education to community endeavors and advocacy, even though NCLB does not require it.
- Ask to serve on the peer-review committee that reviews Title I plans prior to their submission to the US secretary of education.
- Although CBOs are not specifically listed as participants in either the LEA or school-level planning process, they should request representation on planning committees and to be partners in the planning process. CBOs can provide community support to monitor the school accountability requirements; offer reading, literacy, and other instructional services and support; disseminate data and information; refer students and families to health, preschool, social, and before- and after-school services; strengthen education ties with community volunteers; and offer professional development focused on helping teachers and parents work together more effectively.
- Determine who represents CBOs in the SEA and LEA planning processes. Ask about strategies to engage the community in supporting student success; hold LEAs and schools accountable for student success; provide professional development to help teachers and principals work with parents and community leaders; and make resources available to support expanded educational services for students needing the most help.
- Ask to be part of the team of community representatives and parents evaluating state performance regarding school/community links and parental involvement. This information should be part of the annual SEA review sent to the US secretary of education.

Action Opportunities for Parent Leaders

- Work with the SEA to develop parental involvement policies that include linking schools and education to community endeavors and advocacy, even though NCLB does not require it.
- Contact state and local education officials to inquire about including parents and representatives of parents' organizations in state and local planning.
- Ask for copies of state and local plans, ascertain who is on the planning team, and learn about various ways parents are included in the plans.
- Determine how SEA and LEA plans will be distributed to the public and inform other parents how to obtain copies of the plan.
- Provide input to the SEA as it compiles models of effective parental involvement practices; inquire about the criteria and research used to determine model practices.
- Identify ways the SEA will help LEAs and schools build capacity to effectively integrate community and parental involvement into their programs.
- Ask to be part of the team of community representatives and parents evaluating state performance regarding school/community links and parental involvement; this information should be part of the annual SEA review sent to the US secretary of education.
- Ask for representation on committees advising the SEA on carrying out Title 1 responsibilities.

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TITLE I

Sections 1111, 1118

SEA and LEA Parental Involvement Policies

Sections 1111 and 1118 are two of the most critical parental involvement provisions in NCLB. Under these provisions, Title I parents are now required to be part of the discussion concerning how schools will help all children meet state academic and performance standards. Sections 1111 and 1118 also require every SEA, LEA, and school to support and strengthen home/school partnerships; they also detail mandatory steps LEAs and schools must take to build and increase parental involvement programs.

The provisions require parents to get involved in the decision-making process affecting their children's schools. They emphasize the importance of parents of diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds working together. They require LEAs and schools to adopt parental involvement policies with the assistance of Title I parents. In addition, they require coordination of parental involvement activities with other federal programs such as Even Start, Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, transition from preschool to kindergarten programs, and LEP programs.

Community Reference

LOCAL

NCLB provides for the consideration and identification of appropriate roles for CBOs and businesses in LEA and school parental involvement policies.

STATE

SEAs must appoint parents, teachers, LEA representatives, and others familiar with educational standards, assessments, accountability, and the needs of low-performing schools to the peer-review committee that reviews the SEA plan before it is submitted to the US secretary of education for approval.

CBOs with expertise in parental involvement may contract with the SEA and LEAs on parental involvement requirements under the Title II Teacher Quality provision. The provision requires SEAs to collaborate with parents in developing the state plan of action that outlines goals and strategies to increase the number of qualified teachers and principals and in determining professional development activities to enhance teacher quality at the local district level.

SEAs shall use part of their funds to help teachers communicate better with parents through the use of technology.

Parent Reference

LOCAL

Parental Involvement in LEA Plans

A written parental involvement policy—jointly developed and agreed to by Title I parents—details ways the LEA will increase Title I parental involvement to include "programs, activities, and procedures…planned in meaningful consultation" with Title I parents.

LEA Obligations

- Provide coordination and assistance to help schools implement plan activities.
- Coordinate strategies with other programs such as Even Start, Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, transition from preschool to kindergarten programs, and LEP programs.
- Conduct, with parental involvement, an annual policy evaluation to identify barriers to involvement; revise the policy as required.
- Prepare and distribute profiles of student achievement results for each school to parents, teachers, and the public.

Note: LEAs that receive more than $500,000 in Title I funds must use at least 1 percent of those funds for parental involvement activities.

School Obligations

- Draft a written parental involvement policy, jointly developed and agreed to by Title I parents and made available to the community.
- Conduct an annual meeting for Title I parents to inform them about the policy, their rights under Title I, and how they can be involved in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs in the school.

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- Deliver timely information to parents about school programs, school report cards, and state standards and assessments; provide regular opportunities to formulate suggestions and share experiences; and make timely responses to proposals by parents.
- Develop plans to build parental capacity for involvement, to involve parents in policy development, and to carry out the required school/parent compact.
- Help parents understand state academic standards, state and local assessments, how to monitor student progress, and how to work with educators to improve performance.
- Create opportunities for literacy training and for using technology to help parents work with their children.
- Educate teachers, pupil services personnel, principals, and other staff on how to work with parents and on the value of collaboration.
- Deliver, to the extent feasible, information about programs, meetings, and activities for schools and parents in a format and language parents understand.
- Prepare and distribute profiles of each school's student achievement results to parents, teachers, and the public.

LEA and School Parental Involvement Options

- Training for teachers, principals, and other educators to work more effectively with parents
- Literacy training for educators
- Paying reasonable expenses associated with parental involvement activities, e.g., transportation and childcare
- Training parents to train other parents
- Adopting and implementing model approaches to parental involvement
- Establishing a districtwide advisory council to provide advice on parental involvement activities
- Developing appropriate roles for CBOs and businesses in parental involvement policies

STATE

Parental Involvement in SEA Plans

The US secretary of education must create a peer-review process for state plans that includes parents, teachers, LEA representatives, and others familiar with educational standards, assessments, accountability, and the needs of low-performing schools.

Each state must provide technical assistance relating to parental involvement.

Note: CBOs with expertise in parental involvement may contract with SEAs and LEAs regarding the following parental involvement requirements under Title II Teacher Quality provisions:

- Collaborating with parents in developing the state plan of action that outlines goals and strategies to increase the number of qualified teachers and principals and in determining professional development activities to enhance teacher quality at the local district level
- Using funds to help teachers communicate better with parents through the use of technology

Action Opportunities for Community Leaders

- Ask to be involved in developing the SEA Title I plan. If the SEA already has a plan, ask to see the names of the community representatives and parents who were involved in its development. Disseminate the plan to CBOs and parents.
- Ask the SEA to appoint local representatives to the state committee of practitioners. Review the selection criteria. Get clarification of the term "representative" and of the process by which community members will be selected for the committee of practitioners.
- Organize a statewide effort, in conjunction with community representatives and parents, to help parents and the broader community understand the state's curriculum content standards, student performance standards, accountability and assessment system, and student achievement requirements.
- Ask the LEA to consult with community-based leaders as it develops its Title I plan.
- Ask to see what criteria and what process the SEA will use to review district parental involvement policies, to determine whether LEA plans are adequate, and to enforce LEA parental involvement requirements. Determine what recourse is available should LEA non-compliance occur.
- Work with parents and school leaders to develop model district- and school-level parental involvement policies that parents and schools can use as guides for LEA compliance with NCLB requirements.
- Offer to provide the following services to SEAs and LEAs, either on a voluntary or a contractual basis:
  - Professional development training for teachers in working effectively with parents
  - Training in ways that schools and parents can work together more effectively
  - Training and skill-building activities for parents, e.g., how to negotiate with schools when adopting parental involvement policies, how to monitor compliance with policies, how to understand and analyze achievement and report card data distributed by SEAs and LEAs, and how to use the data to increase student achievement
- Work with SEA officials to outline and implement the role the non-parent community can play in support of student achievement, diversity training and skill building for educators and parents, and stronger links between community services and the schools most in need of support.
- Work with schools to provide translators, offer community language ombudsman programs, break down bureaucratic language into meaningful terms, and determine the most effective way to reach out to parents and the community.

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Action Opportunities for Parent Leaders

- Ask to serve on the SEA committee of practitioners and be part of the LEA process to develop a Title I plan.
- Ask to be involved in developing the SEA Title I plan. If the SEA already has a plan, ask to see a list of community representatives and parents who were involved in developing it. Disseminate the plan to CBOs and parents.
- Ask about the processes used to review LEA parental involvement policies, to determine whether LEA plans are adequate, and to enforce LEA parental involvement requirements. Determine what recourse is available should LEA noncompliance occur.
- Discover what kind of assistance the state will provide to LEAs and schools having difficulty implementing parental involvement policies.
- Ask the LEA how it defines programs and activities "planned and implemented with meaningful consultation with parents." NCLB requires LEAs and schools to consult with parents but leaves the interpretation up to the LEA. Parents need to know what process the LEA intends to use for parental involvement, and defining the process should be part of the required written plan prepared by the LEA and individual schools.
- Work with the LEA to educate parents about state curriculum content standards, student performance standards, accountability and assessment system, and student achievement requirements.
- Ask how the SEA will provide technical assistance to schools and LEAs regarding parental involvement.
- Make sure the parental involvement policy includes a school improvement monitoring team that serves as a watchdog to ensure that the Title I strategies and activities in the school's Title I application are being implemented. The team should include community representatives and should meet with teachers and school staff on a periodic basis to identify areas of progress and need. Feed information back to parents and school staff.
- Ask the SEA to go beyond the NCLB parental involvement requirements and include the following options in their plans:
  - A formal state review committee, including parents and community representatives, to monitor LEA parental involvement plans and their implementation
  - Approval criteria for LEA parental involvement policies; specific assistance to help parents, schools, and communities develop their programs; a complaint process parents can employ if the LEA does not comply with the law
  - A coalition of parents' organizations representing a diverse cross section of the school district and the student community to work with the LEA in developing the parental involvement plan
  - A model parental involvement policy to give schools and parents a guide for tailoring a policy suited to their needs
  - Model parental involvement programs and practices; a parental needs assessment; professional development to help teachers and principals engage parents more effectively; LEA and school plans to evaluate the success of LEA and school policies
- The most effective ways to communicate with parents in a format and language they can understand:
  - Identifying unmet language needs
  - Providing interpreters and translations
  - Breaking down bureaucratic language
  - Being culturally sensitive

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Organizing Town Meetings

1. Establish a meeting structure and format

- A three-hour discussion on three questions with eight to ten people per table, engaging in face-to-face conversation, is a good way to structure meetings.
- Stimulate conversations by polling participants and comparing the results to those of a national poll.
- Have few or no presentations, to give people time to talk to one another.

2. Create a diverse working group

- Persuade people with varying points of view to attend.
- Get the chamber of commerce, the alliance of churches, or the senior center to cosponsor the meeting.
- Do not let educators dominate the forum; more is accomplished when community leaders, religious figures, business people, and others are heard.
- Recruit experienced moderators; they play key roles in community conversations and the quality of the experience.

3. Reach agreement on next steps

- Discuss and reach agreement on where to go next; follow-up activities can include inviting the school board to respond to participants' recommendations, holding additional forums on specific topics, or conducting similar forums in churches, senior centers, or other locations.
- Conclude the meeting by summarizing what was discussed and what actions will be taken; closure is needed to give a sense of accomplishment.

4. Consider key factors

- A forum is the beginning of a long-term process to build support for public education and school improvement.
- Organizing a forum is very time consuming.
- Facing legitimate criticisms of public schools and rebutting unfair accusations is demanding and tiring.

Adapted from Jack Jennings, Phi Delta Kappa International, Inc., 1997.
www.ctredpol.org/pubs/expdem.html.

TITLE I

Section 1118

Parent/School Compacts

A parent/school compact is a written agreement between teacher and parent based on the assumption that a student's academic success will improve when the home and the school work together on behalf of the student.

All parents of Title I students are required to sign compacts, which are designed to help teachers and parents determine how each can best support the academic success of the student and enhance effective communication between the school and the home.

The compacts are most effective when teachers are able to explain to parents, in a language they can understand, the academic expectations of their child, the strategies used to achieve those academic goals, their child's learning assets and needs, how they can support the school and help their child meet academic expectations, and the support available to help them assume responsibility for their part of the compact.

Developing meaningful compacts is not easy. Many parents and teachers will need new skills to bridge language, cultural, economic, and social barriers and to build trusting home/school relationships. Parents and teachers need to communicate in a language both understand, develop compacts that reflect the needs and culture of the home as well as those of the student, schedule meetings at times and places sensitive to work requirements, and take advantage of community services that support parents.

Community Reference

LOCAL & STATE

The state requires the LEA to give assurances in the Title I plan submitted to the state that provisions for parent/school compacts are included in its parental involvement policy.

Parent Reference

LOCAL

Every Title I school, in collaboration with parents of Title I children, must develop compacts describing school and parent responsibilities for student learning. The compacts must include the following information:

- How the school will meet its responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive, effective learning environment that enables the student to meet state standards
- Areas of parental responsibility, such as monitoring attendance, overseeing homework completion, monitoring television watching, volunteering in the classroom, and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of the child and positive use of extracurricular time
- Opportunities for communication, such as annual parent/teacher conferences, at which time the compact will be discussed relative to the child's achievement; frequent progress reports; reasonable access to staff; and opportunities to volunteer and participate in the classroom and observe classroom activities

STATE

The state requires the LEA to give assurances in the Title I plan submitted to the state that provisions for parent/school compacts are included in its parental involvement policy.

Action Opportunities for Community Leaders

Although this provision of the act has no specific references to the community, there are, by implication, roles that CBOs and leaders can play to support school/parent compacts:

- Hold a meeting of CBOs and other organizations to determine how services might be consolidated to support parents and schools in implementing compact agreements.
- Offer to assist schools and parents with compact agreements. This assistance might include supplemental instructional services, parent training, volunteer coordination, advocacy work, and health, nutrition, or language development.
- Work with parents and LEAs to determine ways CBOs could be written into compacts as service providers for training in parenting skills; tutoring, volunteer, and before- and after-school programs; literacy, English, and math learning opportunities for parents and students; and other learning activities for parents and students.

Action Opportunities for Parent Leaders

- Provide training and in-service assistance to help parents understand the following components:
  - School culture and structure
  - Parental rights and responsibilities under NCLB
  - NCLB and its complex testing, assessment, standards, and accountability framework
  - How to analyze school report card data and how those data relate to student achievement
  - How to conduct a meaningful compact meeting with the teacher (identify the purpose of the meeting, decide what questions to ask, find out what parental assistance is available)
- Identify model compacts that can serve as guides for teachers and parents. Develop videos and other tools that demonstrate what meaningful compact relationships and meetings entail.
- Work with parents to evaluate compact commitments and determine how successful each party has been in holding up its end of the agreement. Hold periodic meetings to evaluate the compact process, answer questions and provide assistance, and identify schools and parents in need of additional help.
- Work with the district to develop LEA and SEA complaint procedures if the compact process does not proceed as designed, or if parents are not getting the assistance they need to fulfill their responsibilities.
- Work with CBOs to get a list of services included in the compact that assist both home and school in meeting the compact's objectives.
- Work with parents to develop an understanding of how the compact can be used as an advocacy tool to hold the district accountable for its compact commitments.

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A New Wave of Evidence: Keys to Effective Parental Engagement

A new review of research related to parental involvement, published by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, concluded that students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to succeed in school.

The following are key parental involvement research findings:

Engaging parents and families through special school programs makes a difference

- Teacher outreach to parents results in strong, consistent gains in student performance in both reading and math.
- Schools should employ practices such as face-to-face meetings, sending learning materials home, and keeping in touch about progress.
- Workshops for parents on helping their children at home are linked to higher reading and math scores.
- Schools with highly rated partnership programs make greater gains on state tests than schools with lower-rated programs.

Involving families and community leads to higher-performing schools

Schools that succeed in engaging families from diverse backgrounds share three key practices:

- Focus on building trusting, collaborative relationships among teachers, families, and community members
- Recognize, respect, and address families' needs, as well as class and cultural differences
- Embrace a philosophy of partnership where power and responsibility are shared

Organizing parents and community holds schools accountable for results

Aimed mainly at low-performing schools, strategies of community organizing are openly focused on building low-income families' power and political skills. Unlike traditional parental involvement, parent and community organizing intends to hold schools accountable for results. Recent studies have found that community organizing contributed to these changes in schools:

- Upgraded school facilities
- Improved school leadership and staffing
- Higher-quality learning programs for students
- New resources and programs to improve teaching and curriculum
- New funding for after-school programs and family supports

How schools, families and community groups can put these findings into action?

- Recognize that all parents are involved in their children's learning and want their children to do well.
- Design programs that will support families to guide their children's learning, from preschool through high school.
- Develop the capacity of school staff and families to work together.
- Link efforts to engage families, whether based at school or in the community, to student learning.
- Build families' social and political connections.
- Be willing to share power. Make sure parents, school staff, and community members make children's educational development a collaborative enterprise.
- Build strong connections between schools and community organizations.

From A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement, *by Anne T. Henderson and Nancy Berla (Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education, 1994) and* A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement, *by Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp (Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002—in press).*

TITLE I

Sections 1111, 1112

SEA and LEA Report Cards and Assessment Data

Annual LEA and individual school report cards can be powerful accountability tools if used appropriately. Although the law specifies the type and *minimum* amount of information that must be included, community members may want additional key indicators of school and district performance included so they can better analyze whether all children are meeting the state's academic achievement standards. Community members can also offer advice on how to make SEA and LEA report cards more broadly accessible and useful to a wider array of local constituencies. Engaging parents and community members in developing annual report cards helps to clarify expectations regarding schools and deepen the understanding of parent and community roles in supporting high student achievement.

Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year, SEAs must distribute annual state report cards with information on state assessments, and LEAs must issue an annual district report card and one for each of the district's schools. State assessments measure the yearly academic progress each state expects students to attain in reading/language arts and math. If a school does not adequately progress academically for two consecutive years, it is identified as needing improvement. If the school does not progress adequately for four consecutive years, it is identified as being in need of corrective action. Tests, however, should not be the sole determinant of a quality public school. NCLB allows additional measures or indicators of school quality to be included in the state and local report cards.

Note: Many states already provide report cards, but Section 1111 of NCLB standardizes certain data requirements so that every state maintains the same information.

Community Reference

LOCAL & STATE

LEA and school information must be provided directly to schools and parents and must be disseminated widely via the Internet, the media, or public agencies. While the law is silent regarding the community, because report cards must be "disseminated," it is assumed they are intended for community use and consumption.

Parent Reference

LOCAL

LEA and school report cards must include the following information:

- All information required in state report cards, as applied to the local school district
- Student achievement on state tests compared to all students in the district and the state, disaggregated by the same subgroups required in state report cards
- The number and percentage of schools identified as needing improvement
- A comparison of student performance within the LEA's jurisdiction, and in each school, to overall state performance
- Other appropriate information from the LEA that may or may not be on the state report card, such as graduation rates, school safety statistics, extent and type of parental involvement in the school, student attendance rates, and student-to-teacher ratios

LEAs must distribute LEA and school annual report cards to all district schools, and to all parents with children attending those schools, by the beginning of the 2002–2003 school year. LEAs must also make the information widely available to the community through a variety of methods, e.g., posting it on the Internet, distributing it to the media or to public agencies.

The information must be presented in a format and a language parents can understand. NCLB prohibits dissemination of data that would reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student.

STATE

State assessments must provide interpretive, descriptive, and diagnostic reports on individual students in addition to itemized score analyses for principals, teachers, and parents in a format and a language parents can understand.

State assessment results must be disaggregated into subgroups—major racial and ethnic groups, gender, LEP, migrant status, disability, and income—for the entire state, for each LEA, and for each school. Results must be provided to LEAs, schools, and teachers before the beginning of the next school year.

State report cards, due by the start of the 2002–2003 school year, must include the following information:

- Disaggregated and aggregated assessment data
- Percentage of students not tested
- Comparison of students at basic, proficient, and advanced levels to measurable annual state objectives
- Achievement level of each subgroup in each subject tested
- Most recent two-year trends in student achievement for each grade and subject
- Information on other indicators used by the state to determine AYP
- AYP of all school districts
- Graduation rates
- Number and names of schools identified as needing improvement
- Comparison of achievement levels to annual goals
- Percentage of teachers teaching with emergency or provisional credentials
- Percentages of classes not taught by highly qualified teachers for the entire state, and for the highest and lowest school income quartiles in the state

Other information, such as class size, attendance rates, the extent of parental involvement, and an explanation of the state accountability system, may be included.

Action Opportunities for Community Leaders

Because the law is silent on how and to whom state report cards should be distributed, community leaders must make sure the information is widely distributed. Learn the state's intentions. If the state does not plan to distribute the report card widely, implement plans to disseminate the information to the community.

- Make sure the community has input on the format, languages, and presentation of SEA, LEA, and school report cards so that lay audiences, media representatives, and elected officials can understand the information.
- Make sure report cards include other appropriate information, such as graduation rates, school safety statistics, extent and type of parental involvement in the school, student attendance rates, and student-to-teacher ratios from state, district, and individual schools, and any links and resources that support quality education efforts.
- Upon release of SEA and LEA report cards, host community meetings to analyze the information and interpret the data for school improvement. Are the data valid? Backed by multiple measures? Can citizens understand the data?
- Seek second or third opinions from testing and assessment experts when major differences arise about the meaning of state and local report cards.
- Work with the media to understand the report card data and how the data can increase opportunities for students and schools.
- Sponsor workshops for parents on how to use the data to improve schools and recognize schools that are not doing well. Learn what the data mean, what additional kinds of data are required to get a complete picture of school quality, and what constitutes the uses and limitations of achievement measures.
- At both the state and local levels, use the data to engage the public to pressure elected officials to provide adequate resources, qualified teachers, and additional instructional time.

Action Opportunities for Parent Leaders

Because the law is silent on how and to whom state report cards should be distributed, leaders of parent groups must make sure the information is distributed widely. Learn the state's intentions. If the state does not plan to distribute the report card widely, implement plans to disseminate the information to parents.

- Make sure parents have input on the format, languages, and presentation of SEA, LEA, and school report cards so that lay audiences, media representatives, and elected officials can understand the information.
- Work with the SEA, LEAs, and schools to disseminate report card information and provide parents with opportunities to ask questions.
- Work with the media to understand and interpret report card data.
- Host workshops and help educators communicate effectively with parents on how to improve student achievement.
- Host workshops and town meetings to educate parents about appropriate uses and limitations of tests and assessments. Describe the various kinds of assessments, how they can provide mixed results, and how to relate the data to school improvement.
- Lobby for inclusion of information on the level and quality of parental involvement, an evaluation of community linkages, and the adequacy of resources intended for quality education efforts in SEA and LEA report cards.
- At state and local levels, use the data to pressure elected officials to provide adequate resources, qualified teachers, additional instructional time, and special programs such as preschool or before- and after-school programs.
- Work with the business community to allow parents to take paid time to attend parent/teacher conferences and volunteer in their schools, thus making it easier for parents to participate in the implementation of NCLB.

Key Principles of Testing

NCLB sets forth demanding requirements for states and districts regarding the development, implementation, and use of large scale academic assessments as a means of closing the achievement gap and establishing high expectations for all children. Testing requirements, however, must not be interpreted and implemented in ways that lead to further inequity. The act thus offers a powerful opportunity for states and communities to create academic assessment systems that promote both equity and excellence, if guided by the following principles:

- States and districts must develop and implement criterion-referenced tests that are clearly aligned to state/local academic standards and that assess student mastery of those standards.
- The tests should measure the full range of student knowledge and skills called for by the standards informed by the community, from the basics to the more advanced critical thinking skills.
- All students, including English language learners and those with disabilities, should participate in the testing program so that the entire system has strong incentives to improve the performance of every student.
- Because tests do not provide a complete measure of a student's knowledge or skills, high-stakes educational decisions about individual students, e.g., promotion or graduation, should never be made solely or automatically on the basis of a single test score, but should take other relevant information into account as well.
- States and districts should plan for a gap of several years between the initial implementation of a new large-scale standardized test and its formal use—in conjunction with other appropriate information—in making high-stakes decisions for individual students.
- Large-scale standardized test results should trigger a broad array of interventions to assist schools and districts that fail to improve student performance.

From PEN Position Paper on Large-Scale Standardized Testing

TITLE II

Section 1119

Teacher, Principal, and Paraprofessional Quality

Because Congress believes qualified teachers, principals, and paraprofessionals are critical to increasing student achievement, it has established rigorous standards for states and local school districts that require *all* teachers of core academic subjects to be highly qualified by the end of the 2005–2006 school year.

Effective the first day of the 2002–2003 school year, all teachers newly hired in programs funded by Title I must be highly qualified. The term *highly qualified*—as defined in Title II, Part A—means that, at a minimum, teachers must possess a bachelor's degree, must be certified in the subjects and/or grades they teach, must be licensed to teach in the state, must demonstrate subject knowledge and teaching skills, and must not be teaching with an emergency, temporary, or provisional license.

As of January 8, 2002, all newly hired paraprofessionals working in Title I programs who have instructional responsibilities must have completed at least two years of college, must have obtained an AA degree or higher, or must demonstrate a knowledge of instruction through a formal assessment. All paraprofessionals working in Title I programs before January 8, 2002, who do not meet these qualifications have four years to do so.

To implement Title II requirements, each state is required to develop a plan of action that describes how it will meet the highly qualified teacher requirements, defines a qualified teacher and principal, and includes strategies for preparing, training, and recruiting teachers and principals to meet the quality definition. Each school district must follow up with an implementation plan tailored to its local school community. The act requires SEAs and LEAs to seek parent and community input when developing teacher quality action plans and requires schools to notify parents, upon their request, of the qualifications of their children's teachers.

Community Reference

LOCAL

LEAs may use funds to contract with for-profits or nonprofits to provide professional development activities that will develop and implement mechanisms and initiatives to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers and principals.

The US secretary of education can award grants to LEAs partnering with nonprofits that have experience providing training to educators in early childhood education programs.

STATE

Although community members are not specifically identified, CBOs and community members should be involved in the development of the state plans.

Parent Reference

LOCAL

Each LEA must develop a plan to ensure that all teachers are highly qualified by the end of the 2005–2006 school year.

LEAs must provide training to teachers to involve parents more effectively in their children's education.

LEAs must train teachers in the effective use of technology so that teachers can promote parental involvement, increase communication with parents, and help parents understand the technology being applied to their children's education.

STATE

SEAs must develop a plan of action with measurable objectives and targets, detailing how they will meet the goal of a qualified teacher in every classroom by the 2005–2006 school year. SEAs must consult with parents when developing their teacher quality plans of action and the list of professional development activities designed to enhance teacher quality at the local district level.

SEAs must use part of their funds to train teachers to communicate better with parents through the use of technology.

Action Opportunities for Community Leaders

- Ask the SEA how the teacher quality plan and Title II application will be developed, who the community representatives are, and how they were selected.
- If the state has not yet completed its planning, ask to be part of the planning process as a CBO with expertise in teacher issues and public engagement.
- Widely disseminate the state plan to other CBOs and the community. Provide comments on the plan, and seek revisions and changes if necessary.
- Monitor the state planning process and hold state officials accountable for developing and implementing the plan.
- Find out about the LEA planning process, ask to participate on the LEA teacher quality planning committee, and provide information and feedback on the LEA plan.
- Develop statewide and school district coalitions to monitor implementation of the state's teacher quality plan and progress of the school district's teacher quality plan.
- Build statewide and community-based coalitions and partnerships to inform the public about the state plan. Create community and public support and demand for quality teachers and principals through an information campaign.
- Work with elected officials and state policymakers to ensure that state and federal resources are available for achieving teacher quality objectives.

Action Opportunities for Parent Leaders

- Get involved with the state teacher quality planning committee.
- Get a copy of the SEA teacher quality plan. Join statewide coalitions to provide leadership, support, and wide dissemination of the plan.
- Voice comments and concerns about the SEA plan. If the plan is acceptable, build ownership for the plan among parents. Educate parents statewide about the content of the plan and progress toward implementation.
- Work with statewide and local community coalitions to hold school districts and the state accountable for implementation.
- Organize parents and community representatives in efforts to become informed about the need for more qualified teachers. Build public support and pressure state and federal governments to provide the resources needed to increase the number of qualified teachers.

Questions About Teacher Quality

In their urgency to meet teacher quality requirements, states and districts must not overlook the role parents can play in improving communication between school and home, and in improving student academic achievement. Professional development and recruitment efforts must include training teachers on how to work well with parents.

Questions to ask at the state level

- What percentage of teachers in your state would meet the "highly qualified" definition?
- What is the state doing to ensure that all new teachers hired with Title I dollars, as well as non-Title I teachers, are highly qualified?
- Is your state currently experiencing a teacher shortage? How will your state comply with the teacher quality provisions of the law?

Questions to ask at the school district level

- Do higher-income schools in the district have more highly qualified teachers than low-income schools?
- Is there a school district plan to help teachers who are not highly qualified become so, and to recruit more highly qualified teachers into the school district?
- Do the professional development opportunities provided to your teachers include instruction on how to work effectively with parents?

Questions to ask at the local school level

- What are the qualifications of the teachers at your school?
- How many teachers in your schools do not meet the definition of highly qualified?
- How many teachers in your school are not teaching in their field?

From The National PTA's ESEA Implementation Guide, "The Next Step Is Yours." For more information, go to www.pta.org

TITLE I

Section 1111

Teacher Quality: Parents' Right to Know

At the beginning of every school year, school districts receiving Title I funds must notify all parents of children attending Title I schools that they may request information about the qualifications of their children's teachers and paraprofessionals. This information must be provided to parents in a uniform format and "to the extent practicable" in a language that parents can understand. In addition, beginning with the 2002–2003 school year, the US secretary of education must issue a public report—based on information provided by school districts and states—on the annual progress of every state, every school district, and every Title I school in meeting measurable objectives for teacher qualifications.

Community Reference

LOCAL & STATE

No references.

Parent Reference

LOCAL

At the beginning of every school year, Title I LEAs must tell parents they have a right to request the following information on the professional qualifications of their children's teachers:

- Whether the teacher has met state qualifications and has a license for the grade level and the subject area he or she teaches
- Whether the teacher has an emergency or provisional license
- What degrees the teacher holds and the field of discipline of his or her certification or degree
- Whether the child is being taught by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications

LEAs must also provide parents with timely information on a child's achievement levels on state academic assessments and must notify parents if a child has been assigned, or has been taught by—for four or more consecutive weeks—a teacher who is not highly qualified.

STATE

Every year, SEAs must provide the US secretary of education, and make widely available to the public, information on teachers and the percentage of classes being taught by highly qualified teachers.

Action Opportunities for Community Leaders

- Monitor SEA deadlines and release of annual state teacher quality reports. Make sure the SEA disseminates the reports widely in communities and school districts.
- Work with the SEA and parents to ensure that state and local teacher data and information are in a format and a language parents understand. Test the format and language with focus groups and at town meetings to ensure that parents find the information understandable and useful. Give the SEA suggestions for improvement.
- Work with other organizations, policymakers, elected officials, parents, and business leaders to analyze the report and recommend action.
- Monitor LEA plans to disseminate the report through the media, town meetings, schools, and business and community organizations.
- Work with parents to ensure the SEA disseminates the report, that parents understand the report, and that schools hold meetings with parents and staff to explain the implications of the information.
- Use data to create community demand for recruiting more qualified teachers, and to involve the public in recommending and pursuing strategies that will increase the number of qualified teachers. Use the report to analyze whether the district is meeting its obligation under Section 1112 to ensure that low-income and minority students are not being taught—at rates higher than those for other students—by unqualified, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers.
- Recommend strategies to recognize and reward qualified teachers and to retain good teachers and principals.
- Conduct information campaigns on the importance of qualified teachers, what the community must do to attract more qualified teachers, and how to ensure that low-performing schools have qualified staff.

Action Opportunities for Parent Leaders

- Work with CBOs and other organizations to monitor SEA deadlines and the release of annual state teacher quality reports, and to assess the implications for achieving state goals and targets.
- Work with the SEA, CBOs, and other organizations to analyze the state teacher quality information and recommend strategies for further progress.
- Make sure the SEA disseminates the annual report widely in every community and school district.
- Make sure the LEA disseminates the annual state report and the information about individual schools to every parent.
- Make sure the SEA and LEA reports are in a format and a language parents understand. Test the format and language with focus groups and at town meetings to ensure that parents find the information understandable and useful. Give the SEA and the LEA suggestions for improvement.
- Help parents analyze teacher quality information. Use the information to recognize qualified teachers and develop strategies to increase the number of qualified teachers.

Closing the Achievement Gaps: Steps for Using Data to Advocate for Meaningful Educational Improvement

This excerpt lists some important ways to look at your school's performance:

- **Gather data from past years.** This trend data will show whether students are improving or getting worse over time. It also will show if increases or declines in student performance are big or small. Tracking data over time will even out "blips" that are normal in any given year.
- **Look for achievement gaps.** Which groups are being better served? Which groups are not being well served? Is there a gender gap in these groups? Which academic subjects show the largest gaps? Are the gaps growing, shrinking or staying the same over time?
- **Look at class enrollment data.** For example, are substantially greater percentages of low-income and minority students enrolled in special education classes? What is their percentage in Advanced Placement classes? Are greater percentages of middle-class students enrolled in gifted or advanced classes? Consider the effect of these placements on achievement gaps.
- **Look for patterns in the data.** For example, are the lowest-performing students in the least challenging classes? Are those classes taught by the most inexperienced or uncertified teachers? Do the lowest performing students also have the poorest attendance rates or the highest mobility rates?
- **Collect other information.** What additional data do you need to get a clearer picture of the challenges? How has the district interpreted trends across schools in the district? How does your school compare with others? What questions do you have for your school's principal or your school district's leaders?
- **Look at schools that are doing well** or have improved over the past few years. Interview their principals, teachers and parents to learn more about their successful strategies. Educate other parents and community members about best practices that other schools are using. Ask, "Why not us?"

Excerpts from Closing the Achievement Gaps: Using Data to Drive Action *(2 volumes). Published by Parent Leadership Associates (November 2002). For more information, go to www.plassociates.org.*

TITLE I

Sections 1116, 1117

Schools Identified as Needing Improvement, Corrective Action, or Restructuring

More than 8,600 schools nationwide have been identified as needing improvement or corrective action in the 2002–2003 school year.

Improving low-performing schools is a key goal of NCLB, and the act provides many opportunities for the community and parents to work with schools to improve learning. Parents and community leaders can get involved in planning for school change, developing a school needs assessment, evaluating instructional effectiveness, providing supplemental services, and building the school's ability to improve and increase student achievement.

NCLB requires that schools that consistently fail to meet the state definition of AYP be identified for improvement or correction. Using AYP calculations, the state will hold schools and LEAs accountable for having all students reach proficiency on state assessments by 2013–2014. If a school does not attain AYP for two consecutive years, the school is identified by the LEA as needing improvement. If the school fails to meet AYP for four consecutive years, it is identified as requiring corrective action. In each of these circumstances, parents can get involved in the process to improve the district and/or school, request to transfer their child to another public school in the district, or select a supplemental service provider to provide special instructional help to their child outside of school hours.

Community Reference

LOCAL

LEAs must review every school annually to determine whether the school is making annual yearly progress. The report must be disseminated to parents, teachers, principals, schools, and the community, and should be used to continually refine the program of instruction to help students.

Technical Assistance for Schools Needing Improvement
LEAs can cooperate or contract with the SEA, higher-education representatives, private not-for-profit organizations, or educational service agencies to provide technical assistance to schools identified as needing improvement.

STATE

School Support Teams
Each state must develop a statewide state school support team that assists LEAs in helping students meet state standards.

The team shall comprise persons knowledgeable of scientifically based research and teaching and learning practices related to school improvement. Team members shall be drawn from the following categories:

- Highly qualified and distinguished teachers and principals
- Pupil services personnel
- Parents
- Higher-education representatives
- Regional educational research laboratories
- Outside consulting groups

The school support team functions include the following actions:

- Review and analyze school operations and help the school recommend strategies for improvement
- Collaborate with parents and school staff to design, implement, and monitor the school improvement plan
- Evaluate at least semiannually the effectiveness of school personnel, including identification of outstanding teachers
- Help schools meet their goals

SEA Responsibility: Supplemental Service Providers

- SEAs must adopt criteria for selecting providers based on a demonstrated effectiveness in increasing student academic achievement.
- SEAs must—in consultation with parents, teachers, LEAs, and other interested members of the public—select eligible providers based on adopted state criteria.
- SEAs must evaluate and publicly report on the quality and effectiveness of services, and may withdraw approval of providers if, after two years, student academic proficiency does not increase.
- SEAs must notify potential providers annually and provide the application procedures for obtaining approval.

If the state determines an LEA failed to carry out its responsibilities to schools that do not meet AYP, the state may determine the appropriate corrective action against the school.

Parent Reference

LOCAL

LEAs must conduct an annual review of all schools to determine whether they are making AYP and then disseminate the findings to parents, teachers, principals, schools, and the community.

No AYP for Two Consecutive Years

LEAs must identify schools needing improvement before the beginning of the school year following the year in which the failure was first noted.

Within 30 days of notifying the school that it is designated for improvement, the LEA must notify parents of the final determination in a format and a language they can understand. If the school's principal, or a majority of the parents, believes the identification was in error, the principal can provide the LEA with evidence to support this conviction.

Within three months of being identified as needing improvement, the school must develop a revised improvement plan in consultation with parents, school staff, the LEA, and outside experts; plan approval may be conditioned on feedback from parents and community leaders. The two-year improvement plan must include the following elements:

- Strategies based on scientific research that will strengthen the teaching of core academic subjects
- A description of the academic issues that caused the school to be identified as needing improvement
- How Title I funds will be used to remove the school from the needing-improvement category
- Ways in which at least 10 percent of Title I money will be used to provide professional development to teachers and principals
- Details on SEA, LEA, and school responsibilities to provide technical assistance and special help, such as more effective parental involvement, mentoring of teachers, and expanded school programs
- Measurable objectives for progress and for each subgroup of students

By the first day of the school year following identification, LEAs must provide students with an option to transfer to another public school or public charter school served by the LEA and must pay for transportation to the school selected.

LEA Technical Assistance

LEAs are required to provide the following services to encourage more effective parental involvement:

- Analyze assessment data to identify problems, to include the need for improved parental involvement
- Identify and implement needed professional development and changes in instruction
- Analyze school budgets to align resources with methods that improve student achievement

No AYP for Three Consecutive Years

Parents must be provided with the following information:

- An explanation of the meaning of *needs improvement*
- Reasons for identification
- How the school will address the problems and what the LEA and SEA will do to help
- Ways in which parents can become involved
- An option to transfer their children to another public school or public charter school, with transportation paid by the LEA
- Details on supplemental educational services outside the school day

No AYP for Four Consecutive Years

By the end of the fourth year of continued failure to meet AYP, the school will be identified as *needing corrective action.* The LEA must continue to provide parents with the option to transfer their children to another public school, or public charter school, and with technical assistance and supplemental services. The LEA must undertake one or more of the following actions:

- Replace relevant school staff
- Institute a new curriculum, with professional development for staff
- Decrease authority of school management
- Appoint outside consultants
- Restructure the internal organization of the school
- Extend the school year or school day

No AYP for Five Consecutive Years

If after one school year of corrective action the school still fails to make AYP, the school shall be identified for *restructuring.* The LEA must continue to provide parents with public school choice and supplemental services, and must revise the school improvement plan and do one of the following:

- Reopen the school as a public charter school
- Replace all or most of the staff
- Contract with a private management company to operate the school
- Turn over operation of the school to the state
- Restructure the school's governance

Parents and teachers must be given notice of restructuring, must be involved in developing the school improvement plan, and may comment on the plan before it is adopted by the LEA.

STATE

SEA Responsibility: Schools Needing Improvement

LEAs are required to identify the responsibilities of the school, the LEA, and the SEA to provide technical assistance and special help to schools identified as needing improvement. This may include more effective parental involvement, mentoring of teachers, or expanded school programs. For schools identified as needing improvement, parents must be notified what the LEA and SEA are doing to improve achievement.

SEA School Support Teams

Each state must develop a statewide school support team to assist LEAs in helping students meet state standards. The team shall comprise persons knowledgeable about scientifically based research, teaching practices, and learning related to school improvement:

- Highly qualified and distinguished teachers and principals
- Pupil services personnel
- Parents
- Higher education representatives
- Regional educational research laboratories
- Outside consulting groups

The school support team is required to perform the following functions:

- Review and analyze school operations and recommend strategies for improvement
- Collaborate with parents and school staff to design, implement, and monitor the school improvement plan
- Evaluate at least semiannually the effectiveness of school personnel, including identification of outstanding teachers
- Assist schools in meeting their goals

SEA Responsibility: Supplemental Service Providers

- SEAs must adopt criteria for provider selection based on a demonstrated effectiveness to increase student academic proficiency.
- SEAs must—in consultation with parents, teachers, and other interested members of the public—select eligible providers based on adopted state criteria.
- SEAs must evaluate and publicly report on the quality and effectiveness of services, and may withdraw provider approval if, after two years, student academic proficiency does not increase.
- SEAs must provide annual notice to potential providers and provide application procedures for obtaining approval.

If the state determines an LEA failed to carry out its responsibilities to schools that do not meet AYP, the state may determine the appropriate corrective action against the school.

Questions Community and Parent Leaders Should Ask About Public School Choice

NCLB requires that school districts receiving Title I funds provide public school choice options to parents in schools that have been identified as needing improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.

Parents of students in these schools must be given the option to transfer their children to another public school or public charter school that has not been identified for improvement. For public school choice to be meaningful, districts need to clearly communicate school choice options in languages and formats parents can understand.

The following is a list of questions that parents and community members should ask about NCLB public school choice provisions:

- Which schools have been identified as needing improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in your school district? Has the school district notified parents in these schools about public school choice options? Has this communication reached all parents, and is the communication in languages the parents can understand?
- Does the district have space available for the number of students who are eligible to choose another public school? If not, what is the process by which the district will select which students are given permission to attend "choice" schools?
- Do parents have more than one school from which to choose? Are parents allowed to choose any school in the district that has space and for which the student is qualified? Does the district assure diversity in "choice" schools and give all eligible parents equal access to those schools?
- Do parents have the appropriate information they need to make an informed decision about the quality of the school-- information on academic expectations, assessment measures, class size, teacher-student ratio, and school safety?
- Has the school system arranged or encouraged parents to visit the eligible choice schools, meet with the principal and teachers, and discuss school programs?
- Do parents know the school district must provide transportation to the schools they choose?
- What will be the impact of choice on students who remain in low-performing schools? Will student departures drain resources from low-performing schools? Will the district commit special services to the students in those schools?
- Are the "choice" schools required to provide special education services for disabled students?
- Will Title I money follow students to the new "choice" schools?

TITLE I

Sections 1116, 1117

School Districts Identified as Needing Improvement and Corrective Action

In addition to identifying schools needing improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, NCLB allows states to identify school districts that have demonstrated consistent academic failure in meeting the NCLB goal of having all children achieve at proficient and advanced levels.

An LEA is cited as "needing improvement" if the state determines the LEA failed to make adequate progress for two consecutive years. If the LEA fails to respond to measures taken under the needing-improvement process, and fails to make adequate progress for four consecutive years, the LEA is then identified as requiring "corrective action." For each of these categories, NCLB requires the state to intervene and take progressively drastic actions in an effort to turn the school district around. Interventions range from a state takeover of the school district, to replacing the school board and superintendent, to contracting out the instructional program to nonprofit firms.

To ensure that more drastic actions do not occur, NCLB provides various ways for parents and the community to get involved in planning for school change, developing a school needs assessment, evaluating instructional effectiveness, providing supplemental services, and building the district's ability to improve and increase student achievement.

In particular, NCLB provides a unique opportunity for the community and parents to work with the district, pressing for change and removing barriers to learning. In each of the needs-improvement and corrective-action steps, the community and parents must be involved in crucial school district decisions. Actions taken by the state should build on community and parental decision making and collaboration, rather than undermine the democratic process.

Community Reference

LOCAL

No references.

STATE

Parents and the community must be allowed to give feedback on the school district improvement plan.

Notice to Parents
The SEA must publish and disseminate information on any corrective action through the Internet, the media, or public agencies.

SEA School Support Teams
See page 44.

SEA Responsibility: Supplemental Service Providers
See page 45.

Parent Reference

LOCAL

LEAs Needing Improvement
Within three months of being identified as needing improvement, the LEA must revise its existing plan or develop a new plan—in consultation with parents, school staff, and others—that includes the following elements:

- Scientifically based research strategies to strengthen the core academic program in LEA schools
- Actions with the greatest likelihood of improving student achievement in meeting state academic standards
- Professional development needs of the instructional staff
- Specific measurable achievement goals and targets for each subgroup of students identified in the disaggregated data
- Fundamental teaching and learning needs in district schools, the specific academic problems of low-achieving students, and a determination of why schools failed to increase student achievement
- Activities before and after school, in the summer, and during any extension of the school year
- Strategies to promote effective parental involvement in the schools
- SEA and LEA roles in reaching LEA instructional targets

The LEA is required to implement the new or revised plan expeditiously, but no later than the beginning of the next school year after the school year in which the LEA was identified as needing improvement.

The SEA is required to provide each LEA identified as needing improvement with the technical and other assistance necessary for implementing the plan. Such technical assistance shall address problems in implementing the parental involvement activities described in Section 1118 of the act.

LEAs Needing Corrective Action
After providing technical assistance to LEAs identified as needing improvement, the state may proceed to take corrective action if an LEA consistently demonstrates academic failure and fails to make adequate yearly progress by the end of the second full year after

identification as needing improvement. Corrective action may include any of the following measures:

- Defer programmatic funds or reduce administrative funds
- Introduce and fully implement a new curriculum
- Replace LEA personnel relevant to the LEA failure
- Remove particular schools from LEA jurisdiction and establish alternative arrangements or public governance
- Appoint a receiver or trustee to administer the affairs of the LEA in place of the superintendent and school board
- Abolish or restructure the LEA
- Authorize students to transfer from schools operated by the LEA to a better performing public school if a cooperative plan can be arranged, and provide students with transportation

Notice to Parents
The SEA must publish and disseminate information on any corrective action taken through the Internet, the media, or public agencies.

Hearing
If state law permits, the SEA is required, prior to implementing any corrective action, to provide notice of and conduct a hearing to allow the LEA in need of corrective action to contest the state's decision. The hearing must take place no later than 45 days following the decision to implement corrective action.

LEA Improvement
If an LEA makes adequate progress for two consecutive school years, the SEA need no longer identify the LEA for improvement or corrective action in the following school year.

LEA Technical Assistance
See page 43.

Supplemental Service Providers
See pages 42 and 45.

STATE

SEAs must conduct an annual review of LEA progress to determine whether the requirements of the law are being met, and then publicize and disseminate results of the review—including statistically sound disaggregated results—to LEAs, teachers, other staff, parents, students, and the community.

SEAs shall promptly provide parents of students enrolled in LEA schools with results of the state review—in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents can understand—and tell parents how they can participate in upgrading the quality of the school district educational program if an LEA has been identified as needing improvement.

The state must identify all LEAs failing to make AYP as defined in the state plan. Before an LEA is identified as needing improvement, the SEA shall provide the district with an opportunity to review the data and contest the decision by presenting statistical evidence or other substantive reasons why the state decision was in error. The state shall notify the LEA of its final decision within 30 days of receiving the LEA's evidence.

SEAs must provide each LEA identified as needing improvement with technical and other assistance needed to implement LEA plans. Such technical assistance shall address problems in implementing the parental involvement activities described in Section 1118 of the act.

For schools identified as needing improvement, parents must be told what the LEA and SEA will do to increase student achievement.

SEA School Support Team

(Also see page 44.)

After providing technical assistance to LEAs identified as needing improvement, the state may take corrective action if an LEA demonstrates consistent academic failure attributable to underlying staffing, curricular, or other problems.

If an LEA fails to make AYP by the end of the second full year after being identified as needing improvement, the state shall continue to provide technical assistance while instituting one of the following corrective actions:

- Defer programmatic funds or reduce administrative funds
- Introduce and fully implement a new curriculum
- Replace LEA personnel relevant to the LEA failure
- Remove particular schools from LEA jurisdiction and establish alternative arrangements or public governance
- Appoint a receiver or trustee to administer the affairs of the LEA in place of the superintendent and school board
- Abolish or restructure the LEA
- Authorize students to transfer from schools operated by the LEA to a better performing public school if a cooperative plan can be arranged, and provide students transportation

Notice

The SEA must publish and disseminate information on any corrective action the SEA takes through the Internet, the media, or public agencies.

Hearing

If state law permits, the SEA is required, prior to implementing corrective action, to provide notice of and conduct a hearing to allow the LEA in need of corrective action to contest the state's decision. The hearing must take place no later than 45 days following the decision to implement corrective action.

LEA Improvement

If an LEA makes adequate progress for two consecutive school years, the SEA need no longer identify the LEA for improvement or corrective action the following school year.

SEA Responsibility: Supplemental Service Providers

See page 45.

Action Opportunities for Community Leaders

- Determine your role in building public will and demand for improving low-performing schools and school districts. Make sure that role is reflected in the state Title I plan for LEA technical assistance, the state school support team plan, and the supplemental services criteria.
- Identify roles you can play in providing assistance and ensuring that the community as a whole is involved in school reform efforts. Be persistent, since it may be difficult to meet with school officials.

School Support Teams and Information about NCLB

- Make sure community-based leaders and organizations are represented on the state school support team. Identify the roles community organizations can play in providing services, support, advocacy, public engagement, parental involvement, resources, and expertise to low-performing schools. Then make sure these roles are built into the plans and goals of the state school support team.
- Educate CBOs about NCLB provisions and Title I requirements. Recommend community strategies that hold school districts and SEAs accountable for implementing the school improvement plan and complying with NCLB.
- Urge Congress to revise those parts of the law the community finds unworkable.

Supplemental Services

- Ask about the state criteria for eligible supplemental service providers. Apply to become an eligible service provider under the supplemental services provisions as a CBO, providing instructional services and remedial assistance to students in low-performing schools. In addition to individualized tutorials, services could be offered to groups of students through a variety of programs and services, including before- and after- school programs.

Strategies to Improve Low-Performing Schools

- Determine whether there are any identified low-performing schools in the district or whether the district has been identified as low performing.
- Get the names of low-performing schools, request a copy of the LEA plan to improve a particular school, and find out how the LEA intends to involve the community in the improvement plan.
- Meet with school officials to discuss the roles community organizations and leaders can play. Ask to participate on the LEA improvement team and/or the local school improvement teams.
- Work with other community partners—such as higher-education representatives, reform experts, parents, businesses, and civic leaders—to prepare an issues analysis for each low-performing school or school district. Share this paper with community members and engage them in the next steps for discussion and action. The issue analysis should include the following elements:
  - Community opinions
  - A review of the existing reform literature and best practices
  - An analysis of the state assessment and other measures to determine the meaning of the data
  - A list of barriers children face related to teaching and learning
  - Recommendations for next steps
- Reach out to parents and/or parent organizations in low-performing schools or districts to develop a collective plan for improvement. The plan should include sharing ideas and plans, exchanging ways to support one another, discussing cross-cultural activities to bring together a representative cross section of the community, and collaborating on school improvement plans.

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Action Opportunities for Community Leaders (continued)

- Encourage community members to advocate for the needs of low-performing schools and students by building public will through various means:
  - Media awareness and visibility
  - Neighborhood organizations and campaigns
  - PTA or other parents' organizations
  - Partnerships with business, civic, and civil rights groups
  - Pressure for adequate resources
  - Preservation of public awareness of student academic progress
- Work with the LEA and parents to provide translators to bridge language barriers during parent/teacher conferences and meetings.
- Use the school improvement team as a strategy to build community engagement. The team should be diverse, representing the gender, race, and language elements of the community.
- Make sure team meetings are open to the public, are held at times that most community members can attend, and are advertised. Have interpreters available so that school officials, policymakers, experts, and parents and community leaders have an opportunity to discuss issues and take action.
- Perform a needs assessment, or conduct an opinion poll, to ascertain community attitudes about change and reform. Determine what parents and community representatives believe is important and what actions should be pursued. Incorporate this information in the school improvement plan.
- Encourage school officials, policymakers, elected officials, parents, and community organizations to commit to a role that ensures school improvement. Develop a plan that outlines how each will be held accountable for increasing student achievement in the low-performing schools.
- Issue periodic reports on the progress of the school improvement plan in achieving the intended results.

Public School Choice

- Disseminate information to eligible families on the option to transfer their children to another public school and on supplementary service providers. Help them interpret the information and evaluate the service providers and their services.

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Action Opportunities for Parent Leaders

NCLB provides parents of children in schools or districts needing improvement, corrective action, or restructuring with an opportunity to transfer their children to another public school or public charter school. Alternatively, parents can stay with the existing school and work to improve it.

The provisions in Sections 1116 and 1117 provide opportunities for parents, in cooperation with the larger community, to take action that can lead to major improvement for low-performing schools or districts. In many instances, these improvements will not happen unless parents become more involved in the policy, political, and advocacy areas of school reform. Parents must hold their schools, elected officials, and policymakers accountable for serving the instructional, civic, and resource needs of their children. Public engagement is required for public action.

State School Support Team

- Make sure parents are represented on the state school support team. Identify parent needs so that parents can be full participants in school reform. The support team should monitor the extent to which an LEA fulfills the following obligations:
  - Involves parents in reform efforts
  - Complies with NCLB procedures and requirements
  - Establishes a complaint process for parents to address noncompliance
  - Makes resources available for full parental participation
  - Addresses parents' training and skill-building needs
  - Provides training to develop skills that principals and teachers need to increase parental involvement in the school
  - Performs a needs assessment to identify other parental needs

Supplemental Services

- Ask to be involved in developing SEA criteria for approving supplemental service providers. Ask the SEA to require eligible providers to demonstrate that their programs and instructional services involve parents effectively. Ensure that the following questions are answered in the SEA requirements:
  - Does the provider keep parents informed about the academic progress of their children?
  - Does the provider share materials and the curriculum with parents?
  - Does the provider allow parents to observe and evaluate its services?
  - Is there a grievance procedure whereby parents can terminate a contract and file a complaint?

Parental Involvement

- Contact the LEA to obtain the following information on improving low-performing schools and make it available to parents:
  - Names of low-performing schools in the district
  - LEA plans to improve low-performing schools
  - Assessment, teacher quality, and other data about low-performing schools
  - The role of parents in school reform efforts, and the right to have meetings with school officials on the role parents could play
  - Ways in which parents can participate on LEA improvement teams and/or school improvement teams
- Educate parents about rights and responsibilities under NCLB if their school or district is identified as needing improvement, corrective action, or restructuring:
  - Hold meetings to enlist the support and involvement of parents in improving their schools.

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Action Opportunities for Parent Leaders (continued)

- Develop, in languages they can understand, materials and presentations about parent rights and responsibilities under NCLB.

- If more than one school in the district has been identified as needing improvement or corrective action, create a network of parents and parent organizations from all of the schools to work together and consolidate efforts.

- Make sure the improvement team gets parents and community representatives involved in analysis, discussion, debate, and recommendations to pinpoint barriers to learning and ways to increase learning opportunities for students.

- Parents should play a prominent role on the improvement team by participating in the following activities:
  - Determining team goals and objectives
  - Selecting team members
  - Securing financial resources
  - Disseminating team meeting information and minutes
  - Requiring all meetings to be open to the public
  - Mapping out an agenda and timelines
  - Evaluating the outcomes of the team's work
  - Implementing the team's recommendations
  - Monitoring the work

- Organize special meetings and outreach programs for parents whose children attend schools that need improvement or corrective action. Discuss data on SEA and LEA report cards, the meaning of state assessments and AYP, the process for improving the school and increasing student achievement, and the support parents can expect to receive from the school support team as well as from the school.

- Assess parent needs to determine how to increase parental capacity for involvement in the school—and identify the information, skills, and support parents will need to participate in the school improvement process.
  - Transportation
  - Childcare
  - Translation of materials and information into languages parents can understand
  - Meeting schedules that accommodate working parents; time spent at school and with teachers is essential—businesses and other workplaces should be encouraged to make this time available.

- Work with principals and teachers to develop the skills they need to collaborate effectively with parents and to create a positive environment for parents:
  - Professional development on building parental involvement capacity at the school
  - Professional development on holding successful conferences with parents on the academic, emotional, and developmental progress of their children
  - Increased communication with parents
  - Creation of parent centers at the school that provide services such as guidance and technical assistance related to parenting skills, advocacy, and understanding the school's instructional programs
  - Training in interacting effectively with LEP parents to meet their diverse cultural needs
  - Keeping the school building open in the evenings when parents are more likely to be available to meet with teachers

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Action Opportunities for Parent Leaders (continued)

- Work with community leaders and organizations to organize town meetings and community dialogues. Determine barriers to achievement and propose recommendations for improvement. Ensure that appropriate action will take place based on participant recommendations. Build communities of learning and keep citizens informed on the following situations:
  - School reform
  - State assessment or other data that relate to student achievement and school success
  - Characteristics that constitute a quality school and education
  - Ways in which research-based instruction can have an impact on student learning
  - The roles gender, race, and class play in building quality schools
  - Varying amounts of resources across schools
  - Ways to provide equitable services
  - Ways in which the community can be accountable for ensuring quality schools
- Hold school officials, policymakers, and elected officials accountable for implementing recommendations of the school or the school district improvement teams.
- Monitor progress on the school improvement plan and keep the public and the media informed about the progress.
- Apply pressure by building advocacy networks and lobby state legislatures for more resources, school boards for more quality teachers, Congress for promised NCLB funding, and school officials for restructuring and other school reforms.
- After the plan has been completed, assume responsibility for holding public officials accountable for implementing the plan.

Public School Choice

- Ensure that parents who elect to transfer their children to another public school have information about school options, are able to interpret the information received from those schools, have an opportunity to visit the schools, and have enough information to make an informed choice.
- Disseminate information about school transfers widely throughout the school community. Work with school officials to develop a process by which parents can select another school.
- Work with the LEA to disseminate information to parents who elect to transfer their children to another public school. Help parents whose children remain in the school to develop appropriate learning plans with the provider of supplemental services and the LEA.

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Judging School Quality

Visit your child's classrooms, those of other teachers, and—if possible—classes in other schools to get a firsthand look at the following qualitative factors:

- Are students engaged in the learning process? Does the content or the skill being taught seem important for that grade level?
- Are teachers knowledgeable about the subjects? Do they demonstrate flexible teaching styles for different types of content and different types of students?
- Do samples of student work posted on classroom walls or in student journals or portfolios reflect high standards? Are there clear differences in the quality of student work between classrooms? Between schools? Is everyone completing high-quality projects?
- Does homework consist of basic skills worksheets, repetitive sentence writing, or material not necessarily related to the present curriculum? Is homework project-based, supplementing and reviewing classroom instruction?
- Do parents receive timely information from the school and teachers that explains the purposes of assignments and how parents can help at home?
- Are too many topics covered just for the purpose of covering the curriculum? Or are fewer topics covered but in greater depth so that students develop important problem-solving abilities? Results from the recent Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) suggest that American schools try to cover too much material at the sacrifice of teaching learning skills that will help children for life.

Schools are more than just classrooms, and parents may need to talk to other parents, teachers, and administrators or attend school-site council meetings to judge other important factors.

- Have standards been developed at each grade level? Does the instruction and assessment match the standards? Is student progress clearly reported to parents and students using a variety of methods including report cards, nationally normed multiple-choice tests, state tests (when available), and performance assessments?
- How good is school leadership? For most parents this equates to the principal, but also can include assistant principals and even the administrative staff. Although the longevity of a principal is not a necessary indicator of success, frequent turnover often indicates a struggling school. Does the leadership have strong teaching experience? Do they communicate well with parents and teachers?
- Are parents' voices heard and does action follow? Not every suggestion from a parent is a good one, but schools should encourage parental involvement and have a process for reviewing and implementing valuable ideas.

Excerpt from the 1998 issue of "Our Children: The National PTA Magazine," Ron Dietel. http://www.cse.ucla.edu/CRESST/pages/ptaron.htm.

TITLE I, *Section 1112*

TITLE III, *Sections 3113, 3212, 3213, 3247, 3302*

Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students

NCLB requires SEAs and LEAs to assess all limited English proficient (LEP) students in a valid and reliable manner. The assessment must yield accurate, reliable information about what students need to know based on state standards, and must provide information on the English language proficiency of LEP students, i.e., how well those students are mastering English in listening, reading, writing, and speaking.

The assessment must be in a language and a format most likely to elicit this information, which could require developing an assessment in a student's native language or conducting an oral test. Some states have combined both the LEA and the SEA assessments into one test, other states use two tests, and yet other states exclude LEP students from taking state assessments until the students master English.

SEAs and LEAs are obligated by law to help LEP students learn English. Title III offers special funding to school districts that teach English to students with limited English skills and understanding. Under this title, local school districts decide on the method of instruction to be used to teach LEP students English, with the provision that parents be involved in the decision making. Parents may remove their children from LEP programs, or they make take their children from one program and enroll them in another. After LEP students have attended school in the United States for three consecutive years, the school district is required to move them into English-only instruction, and the students are required to take state assessment tests in reading/language arts and math in English. On a case-by-case basis, the state may grant a waiver for another year if evidence proves a student is not adequately proficient in English to take the state assessment.

Community Reference

LOCAL

School districts must submit plans to the SEA describing how the eligible entity will promote community participation in LEP programs, including assurance that community groups and nonprofit organizations were consulted during plan development.

LEAs receiving funds may collaborate with a nonprofit organization to carry out training for teachers and other education personnel working with LEP children.

STATE

SEAs must consult community groups when developing *annual measurable achievement* objectives.

The US secretary of education may award grants to school districts to provide professional development and training to teachers, other educators, and community-based personnel in developing innovative, locally designed, high-quality instruction for LEP children. The instruction should expand, develop, or strengthen language educational programs.

Parent Reference

LOCAL

School districts must submit plans to the SEA describing how they will promote parental participation in programs for LEP children, including consulting parents in plan development.

LEAs must develop a parent-outreach program that involves parents as active participants in their children's instruction and provides family literacy support.

Parents must be notified of the following conditions by an eligible entity within 30 days of the beginning of the school year:

- That their child has been identified as LEP and the level of the child's English proficiency
- What programs will be used for their child, how those programs will help teach their child English, and how those programs will meet the educational needs of their child
- That they have the right to decline enrollment of their child in the program, to remove their child immediately from the program, or to enroll their child in another program if one is available
- Expected duration and exit requirements

Note: If parents elect to place their child in a regular classroom, the LEA is nonetheless obligated by law to provide special language instruction.

The school must notify parents of a program's failure after two years. Parents shall be informed that their child is failing in the program within 30 days after the school identifies the failure. The notification shall be in a language and format the parents can understand.

If, after four years, a child fails to attain English proficiency, the school will be required to modify its program, curriculum, and method of instruction.

STATE

States must consult parents when developing *annual measurable achievement* objectives used to monitor the progress LEP students are required to make in learning English.

Action Opportunities for Community Leaders

- Get a copy of the LEA Title III plan and ask which community organizations gave input to the plan as required by law. Offer your services and expertise, if appropriate. Use the planning process as a community-building activity and involve the larger community in the plan's development.
- Ask about SEA or LEA plans to subcontract with CBOs to provide teachers and educators with professional development and training in developing effective means of working with LEP students.
- Ask about SEA or LEA plans to subcontract with CBOs to provide outreach and literacy services to parents and families of LEP students.
- Take the opportunity to build or enhance community service links, such as social services, preventive health programs, parenting training, drug and substance abuse programs, and supplemental language programs.
- Monitor the instructional progress of LEP students. Work with school districts, policymakers, and elected officials to ensure that LEP students have appropriate resources and materials to adequately support their instructional program.
- Work with parents and community representatives to ensure that NCLB provisions are implemented.
- Educate parents and community representatives about the provisions of Title III and what their rights are under the law. Organize community dialogues and town meetings to bring together parents of various language and ethnic groups to discuss critical educational and instructional issues.

Action Opportunities for Parent Leaders

- Get a copy of the LEA plan. Find out how parents and families are included in LEP objectives, and the ways in which the district plans to include literacy opportunities for families.
- Find out how the school district intends to communicate with parents, the means the district will employ to communicate, and the language(s) that will be used.
- Become familiar with the various LEP programs offered by the school district and the benefits and drawbacks of each.
- Become knowledgeable about parental rights and responsibilities under NCLB.
- Request information about a child's program in a format and a language that inform parents about the academic progress of their child.
- Know which teachers, educators, and/or community agencies to contact if parents have difficulty communicating with their child's teacher or other school officials.

TITLE X

Section 721

Education of Homeless Students

This section of NCLB includes renewal of the *McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act*, which provides grants to states for services to homeless children, with a greater emphasis on student achievement. The *Homeless Assistance Act* revises previous homeless requirements by extending accountability for all 930,000 homeless students in the country to all districts, instead of just those that receive money under the act.

In addition, all states are required to designate an Office of Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youth. All districts also are required to have a liaison for homeless children and youth who is responsible for identifying homeless minors and making sure they are enrolled in school. The *Homeless Assistance Act* defines as homeless those children living in motels, campgrounds, or cars, and those who are living with another family. It prohibits schools from segregating homeless children in separate classes or schools, and it extends additional rights to their parents. The new provisions became effective on July 1, 2002.

Community Reference

LOCAL

LEAs must coordinate the provision of services to homeless children with local service agencies, programs, or individuals that provide services to homeless children and families:

- Head Start, Even Start, before- and after-school programs, mentoring and other tutorial services, preschool, healthcare services, and dental services
- Educators, child development specialists, and preschool personnel
- Educators and trainers of parents of homeless children and youth, and their rights under the *Homeless Assistance Act*
- Domestic violence agencies, runaway and homeless youth centers, and homeless shelter operators
- Community organizations and groups that represent homeless children, youths, and their families

STATE

SEAs must submit plans to the US Department of Education describing how they will implement homeless programs, and how they will ensure that homeless children have equal access to the same programs and services provided to other children:

- Public preschool and elementary and secondary schools
- Transportation
- Meal services
- Dispute resolution related to the placement of homeless children
- Immunization and medical requirements
- Residency requirements
- Lack of birth certificates and school records
- Guardianship issues
- Uniform and dress code requirements

Each state must appoint an education coordinator of homeless children and youth. This coordinator compiles information about the problems homeless children encounter in gaining access to preschool and elementary and secondary schools, tracks the progress schools are making in moving homeless children toward achievement of state standards, and develops strategies for addressing problems homeless children may have in the following areas:

In the homeless education plan submitted to the US Department of Education, SEAs must describe how they will coordinate with LEAs and with the following entities:

- Educators, including child development and preschool personnel
- Providers of services to homeless and runaway children, such as domestic violence agencies, runaway and homeless youth centers, and homeless shelter operators
- Community organizations and groups representing homeless children, youths, and families

Parent Reference

LOCAL

LEAs must designate a staff person as liaison for homeless youth and must supervise the implementation of programs for homeless youth.

LEAs are required to notify parents, guardians, or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth, of the following:

- Parents have the right to choose the public school they wish their child to attend; the LEA must provide a list of those schools.
- The child is not required to attend a separate school for homeless children or youth.
- The child will receive services comparable to those received by other children, including transportation services, educational services, and school meals.
- Parents will be offered meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their child.

If parents dispute the school district's placement of their child, the parents have the right to appeal the decision through a dispute process by contacting the LEA staff homeless program coordinator/liaison. Until a resolution is reached, the child must be placed in the parent's school of choice.

LEAs must publicly post notices about the rights of homeless children and youth, and the services they are eligible for, in schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens.

The communication parents receive from the school will be in an understandable format and language and, to the extent feasible, in their native language.

To the extent possible, a child will be kept in the school of origin for the entire school year, unless doing so is contrary to the parents' wishes. The school of origin is the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled.

LEAs must share the costs and responsibilities if a homeless child moves to another district in mid-year but wishes to continue attending school in the LEA of origin.

STATE

No references.

Action Opportunities for Community Leaders

- Educate community leaders and organizations about the provisions of the *Homeless Assistance Act.*
- Inform community organizations at the state and local levels that the act requires SEA and LEA homeless education plans to include ways to coordinate activities and programs with schools, service providers, children's advocates, health professionals, housing authorities, preschool programs, social services, and parents.
- Identify service providers at state and local levels that should collaborate with the SEA coordinator for the homeless to provide services and programs in support of the school's instructional opportunities.
- Contact the LEA liaison for the homeless and get included in the school district's plan for the homeless and in the planning process. Become knowledgeable about the provisions of the LEA plan.
- Create a local coalition of community organizations or become part of an existing coalition of organizations and individuals that monitors the implementation of the program for the homeless.
- Offer services to supplement the school's program. Help parents understand the *Homeless Assistance Act* and their rights under the act. Identify and find students who should be served under the plan, and help parents or guardians to place homeless students in schools.
- Work with parent organization leaders and LEA liaisons for the homeless to inform parents and/or guardians of homeless children about their rights under the *Homeless Assistance Act*, community services available to them, and supplemental instructional services available to help homeless children and youth meet the state academic standards.
- Work with LEA liaisons for the homeless and educators to provide teachers and principals with professional development to heighten their understanding of and sensitivity to the needs and circumstances of homeless children and families.
- Participate on the team that evaluates the successes or challenges of the LEA homeless education program. Ensure that evaluation results and comments are part of the report the LEA sends to the SEA.

Action Opportunities for Parent Leaders

- Educate parents and parent organizations about the provisions of the *Homeless Assistance Act* and utilize various means to reach homeless parents and guardians to inform them about the provisions of the act.
- Work with LEA liaisons for the homeless and with CBOs to disseminate information about the act. Help parents of homeless children understand their rights under the act by working with the school and offering to serve as intermediaries for parents in their interactions with schools.
- Work with LEA liaisons for the homeless and with educators, providing professional development to heighten their understanding of and sensitivity to the needs and circumstances of homeless children and families.
- Work with the school district to identify homeless children and families eligible to receive assistance under the provisions of the *Homeless Assistance Act.*
- Work with LEA liaisons for the homeless and community organizations to evaluate the needs of homeless children and families. Coordinate with schools, service providers, advocates for children and the homeless, health professionals, housing authorities, preschool programs, and social services to meet those needs and make essential services available.
- Include homeless parents as full participants in the parental involvement activities addressed in the required LEA parental involvement policies.
- Ensure that all communication between the parents and the school is in a format and a language understandable to the parents.
- Participate on the team that evaluates the successes or challenges of the LEA homeless education program. Ensure that evaluation results and comments are part of the report the LEA sends to the SEA.

Other Opportunities for Involvement and Action

NCLB provides parents and community leaders many opportunities to become involved beyond the sections and programs detailed in this guide. Parents and community members should be aware of other program areas in the law that afford them opportunities to take action.

Schoolwide Services and Programs (Title I, Part A)
Under Title I, LEAs shall involve parents and other members of the community in developing a plan for schoolwide services and programs. (Section 1114)

LEAs shall coordinate Title I activities with Head Start, Early Reading First, and other early childhood development programs. (Section 1120)

Reading First (Title I, Part B, Subpart 1)
LEAs may use Reading First funds to provide training in the essential components of reading to a parent who volunteers as a reading tutor, enabling that parent to support the instructional practices of the school. (Section 1202)

To receive Reading First funds, SEAs must develop a reading and literacy partnership committee. In addition to education experts, the committee shall include a community-based organization that works to improve children's reading skills, a parent of a public or private school student, or a parent who educates a child at home, all selected jointly by the governor and the state superintendent. (Section 1203)

Even Start (Title I, Part B, Subpart 3)
The William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy program serves families most in need of literacy services, as evidenced by a low level of adult literacy or English language proficiency. Programs should be designed to accommodate a participant's work schedule, including scheduling and locating services to allow participation by parents and children, providing childcare for the parents, and providing parents with transportation to enable them to participate in the program. (Section 1235)

Under the Even Start program, the state must assemble a panel to review SEA grants. The panel may include a representative of a parent/child educational organization and a representative of a community-based literacy organization. (Section 1238)

National Assessment of Title I (Title I, Part E)
The US secretary of education shall establish an independent review panel to advise the secretary on the national assessment of Title I and its impact on states, LEAs, schools, and students, and shall appoint parents to the panel. (Section 1501)

The national Title I assessment will investigate, among other issues, how effective schools, LEAs, and states have been in publicizing and disseminating LEA report cards to teachers, school staff, students, parents, and the community. (Section 1501)

Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (Title IV, Part A)

State applications to receive money designated for safe and drug-free schools and communities programs must provide assurances that the application was developed in consultation with parents, students, and representatives of community-based organizations. The application must also describe how parental input will be sought regarding the use of funds by the SEA and the chief executive officer of the state. (Section 4113)

The US secretary of education will evaluate biennially the impact of safe and drug-free schools and communities programs, including the effectiveness of parental involvement and training programs. (Section 4122)

LEAs must coordinate safe and drug-free schools and communities programs with other school and community-based services. They must promote coordination with community groups, coalitions, and government agencies. (Section 4115)

21st Century Community Learning Centers (Title IV, Part B)

Those eligible to apply for 21st century community learning center funds include LEAs, CBOs, public or private entities, or a consortium of two or more such agencies, organizations, or entities. (Section 4201)

When applying, SEAs must provide assurances that teachers, parents, students, and representatives of the business community and of CBOs were consulted. (Section 4203)

In developing its application and plan to receive money under the 21st century learning community centers, the local entity must describe the partnership among the LEA, a CBO, and another public or private entity; must provide an evaluation of community needs and availability of resources for the Center; and must provide assurance that the community will be given notice of intent to submit the application. (Section 4204)

Eligible activities under the 21st century learning community center programs include those that promote parental involvement and family literacy. (Section 4205)

Local Innovative Educational Programs (Title V, Part A, Subpart 3)

Every LEA is eligible to receive federal funding under Title V, which encourages school districts to create programs that will promote increased academic achievement. These innovative programs then become part of the district's overall reform strategy. To receive funding, an LEA must submit an application that identifies the needs of the school district, how the funds will be used, and provisions for systematically consulting with the parents of children who attend elementary and secondary schools in the district or with groups involved in implementing the programs selected. The act identifies 27 uses for the money, of which four pertain to community and parental involvement. Some of the possible uses of Title V money include:

- Initiatives to generate, maintain, and strengthen parental and community involvement
- Expansion and improvement of school-based mental health services, including direct individual or group counseling services provided to parents, students, and school personnel
- Programs to improve the literacy skills of adults, especially the parents of children served by the LEA, including adult education and family literacy programs
- Academic intervention programs, operated jointly with CBOs, that support academic enrichment and counseling programs conducted during the school day for students most at risk

Charter School Programs (Title V, Part B, Subpart 1)
States applying for assistance under the charter school program must show how they intend to inform teachers, parents, and communities about the program. (Section 5203)

SEAs must describe how the charter school will involve parents and other members of the community in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school. (Section 5203)

Developers eligible to start a charter school include individuals or groups of individuals (including public or private nonprofit organizations), which may include teachers, administrators, other school staff, parents, or other community members. (Section 5210)

National Assessment of Educational Progress (Title VI, Section 602)
Under the national assessment of educational progress (NAEP), two parents not employed by a local, state, or federal educational agency and two representatives of the general public, who may be parents but are not employed by a local, state, or federal educational agency, shall serve on the National Assessment Governing Board. This board was created to oversee NAEP. (Section 412 under the Amendment to the National Education Statistics Act of 1994)

Parents of children participating in NAEP must be notified before an assessment is administered that their child may be excused from the assessment, and that students are not required to answer any test questions. (Section 411 under the Amendment to the National Education Statistics Act of 1994)

Unsafe School Choice Option (Title IX, Section 9532)
Any student attending a "persistently dangerous" public school must be allowed to transfer to a "safe" public school in the same district. In addition, any student who falls prey to a "violent criminal offense" at school may transfer to a safe public school in the same district. The community and parents should work with state officials to define the terms "safe" and "violent criminal offense," the definition of which NCLB leaves up to the states. In states that have already defined the terms, the community and parents should be notified of those definitions.

Armed Forces Recruiter Access to Students and Student Recruiting Information (Title IX, Section 9528)
Every LEA receiving funds under NCLB must provide military recruiters with the same access to secondary school students as is generally provided to representatives of institutions of higher education or to prospective employers. LEAs receiving funds shall also provide, upon a request made by military recruiters or representatives of an institution of higher education, access to the names, addresses, and telephone listings of secondary school students. A secondary school student, or the parent of the student, can request that the student's name, address, and telephone listing not be released without prior written parental consent.

NCLB Programs

NCLB has many provisions besides those identified in this guide. The entire NCLB table of contents is listed below. Many school districts and communities in the country are eligible to receive money from the various provisions. Identify the programs for which your school district or your school receives assistance and how the resources are used to increase school achievement.

Title I:	**Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged**
Part A	Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
Part B	Student Reading Skills Improvement Grants
Part C	Education of Migratory Children
Part D	Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
Part E	National Assessment of Title I
Part F	Comprehensive School Reform
Part G	Advanced Placement Programs
Part H	School Dropout Prevention
Part I	General Provisions
Title II:	**Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers and Principals**
Part A	Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund
Part B	Mathematics and Science Partnerships
Part C	Innovation for Teacher Quality
Part D	Enhancing Education Through Technology
Title III:	**Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students**
Part A	English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act
Part B	Improving Language Instruction Educational Programs
Title IV:	**21st Century Schools**
Part A	Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities
Part B	21st Century Community Learning Centers
Part C	Environmental Tobacco Smoke
Title V:	**Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs**
Part A	Innovative Programs
Part B	Public Charter Schools
Part C	Magnet Schools Assistance
Part D	Fund for the Improvement of Education
Title VI:	**Flexibility and Accountability**
Part A	Improving Academic Achievement
Part B	Rural Education Initiative
Part C	General Provisions

TITLE VII: Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education

Part A Indian Education

Part B Native Hawaiian Education

Part C Alaska Native Education

TITLE VIII: Impact Aid Program

TITLE IX: General Provisions

Part A Definitions

Part B Flexibility in the Use of Administrative and Other Funds

Part C Coordination of Programs; Consolidated State and Local Plans and Applications

Part D Waivers

Part E Uniform Provisions

Part F Evaluations

TITLE X: Repeals, Redesignations, and Amendments to Other Statutes

Part A Repeals

Part B Redesignations

Part C Homeless Education

Part D Native American Education Improvement

Part E Bureau of Indian Affairs Programs

NCLB Implementation Timeline: Key Action Points

2002–2003 SCHOOL YEAR
July
Noncompetitive grants, such as Title I, must be used in accordance with the new law
Beginning of school year
Corrective actions apply to all schools identified as in need of improvement
Teachers newly hired with Title I funds must meet *highly qualified* teacher requirements
Paraprofessionals newly hired with Title I funds must meet new quality standards
January
US Department of Education must issue final regulations
During school year
States must set annual yearly progress based on 2001–2002 data
LEP students must be assessed in English proficiency
States must participate in the NAEP, if the US Department of Education provides funds for participation
SEAs and LEAs must begin reporting progress toward the goal of having all teachers highly qualified within three years
SEAs and LEAs must issue public report cards
2005–2006 SCHOOL YEAR
Beginning of school year
States must have standards for science
During school year
Annual statewide assessments in reading and math for grades 3–8 must be in place
End of school year
Core academic subject teachers and paraprofessionals in Title I programs must meet the *highly qualified* requirements
2007–2008 SCHOOL YEAR
During school year
Annual science assessments in at least one of each of the following grade spans, 3–5, 6–9, and 10–12, must be in place

Source: Learning First Alliance, "Major Changes to ESEA in the No Child Left Behind Act," www.learningfirst.org/pdfs/nochildleft.pdf.

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Glossary

No Child Left Behind uses words and terms that might not be familiar to parents and community leaders. Using a number of sources, this glossary has been developed to increase parent and community understanding of the legal and educational terminology used in the act. Sources for this glossary are:

- US Department of Education
- National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST)
- *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB)
- *Education Week*
- National Coalition of Education Activists (NCEA)
- Public Education Network (PEN)

Accountability system — Each state sets academic standards for what every child should know and learn. Academic achievement is measured for every child, every year. The results of these annual tests are reported to the public. (US Dept. of Education)

Achievement gap — The differences in academic performance among groups identified racially, ethnically, and by income levels. In the United States, white students tend to outperform children of color, and wealthier students often do better than poorer ones. (NCEA)

Adequate yearly progress (AYP) — An individual state's measure of yearly progress toward achieving state academic standards. Adequate yearly progress is the minimum level of improvement that states, school districts, and schools must achieve each year. (US Dept. of Education)

Alignment — The process of making content standards, performance standards, assessment, and instruction consistent so they are most effective in helping students reach state standards. (NCEA)

Alternative assessments — Ways, other than standardized tests, to get information about what students know and where they may need help, such as oral reports or discussions, projects, performances, and experiments. (NCEA)

Alternative certification — Most teachers are required to have both a college degree in education and a state certification before they can enter the classroom. *No Child Left Behind* encourages states to offer other methods of qualification that allow talented individuals to teach subjects they know. (US Dept. of Education)

Assessments — Another word for "test." Under *No Child Left Behind*, tests are aligned with academic standards. Beginning in the 2002–2003 school year, schools must administer tests in each of three grade spans: grades 3–5, grades 6–9, and grades 10–12 in all schools. Beginning in the 2005–2006 school year, tests must be administered every year in grades 3 through 8 in math and reading. Beginning in the 2007–2008 school year, science achievement must also be tested. (US Dept. of Education)

Benchmark — A detailed description of a specific level of student achievement expected of students at particular ages, grades, or developmental levels. Benchmarks are often represented by samples of student work. A set of benchmarks can be used as checkpoints to monitor progress in meeting performance goals within and across grade levels. (CRESST)

Bilingualism — The ability to read, speak, understand, and write well in two languages. (NCEA)

Bilingual education — An in-school program for students whose first language is not English or who have limited English skills. Bilingual education provides English language development plus subject area instruction in the student's native language. The goal is for the child to gain knowledge and be literate in two languages. (NCEA)

Charter schools — Charter schools are independent public schools designed and operated by educators, parents, community leaders, educational entrepreneurs, and others who operate outside of the traditional system of public schools. They are sponsored by designated local or state educational organizations, which monitor their quality and effectiveness. (US Dept. of Education)

Content standards — The information, ideas, and facts students are supposed to learn in a particular grade. (NCEA)

Core academic subjects — English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civic and government, economics, arts, history, and geography. (US Dept. of Education)

Corrective action — When a school or school district does not make yearly progress, the state will place it under a corrective action plan. The plan will include resources to improve teaching, administration, or curriculum. If failure continues, then the state has increased authority to make any necessary, additional changes to ensure improvement. (US Dept. of Education)

Disaggregated data	To disaggregate means to separate a whole into its parts. In education, this term means that test results are sorted by groups of students who are economically disadvantaged, from racial and ethnic minority groups, have disabilities, or have limited English fluency. This practice allows parents and teachers to see more than just the average score for their child's school. Instead, parents and teachers can see how each student group is performing. (US Dept. of Education)
Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)	The principal federal law affecting K–12 education. The *No Child Left Behind Act* is the most recent reauthorization of the ESEA. (US Dept. of Education)
English language learner (ELL)	A student for whom English is a second language and who is not at grade level in reading and writing English. An ELL student is also known as an LEP student. (NCEA)
English mainstreaming	The act of placing students with limited English in regular classrooms with no plan for translation or extra help. (NCEA)
Highly qualified teacher	A highly qualified teacher is defined as one who has obtained full state teacher certification or has passed the state teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach in the state; holds a minimum of a bachelor's degree; and has demonstrated subject area competence in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches. (NCLB)
In consultation with	Although consultation is not specifically defined in the statute, effective consultation would be broad-based, reaching out to a wide range of parents in the state or community, including those with limited literacy, limited English proficiency, or disabilities. It should also be ongoing throughout the process of development and implementation. (NCLB)
Inclusion	The practice of placing students with disabilities in regular classrooms. Also known as mainstreaming. (NCEA)
Instruction	Refers to the methods teachers use. Common methods are lecture, discussion, exercise, experiment, role playing, small group, and writing assessments. The most effective teachers use many methods because not all are effective with all students. (NCEA)
Limited English proficient (LEP)	Refers to students for whom English is a second language and who are not at grade level in reading and writing English. (NCEA)
Limited English proficiency (LEP) test	A test of English language proficiency skills given to all LEP students to ascertain the student's readiness to take the state assessment tests in English. (PEN)

Local education agency (LEA) An LEA is a public board of education or other public authority within a state that maintains administrative control of public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state. (US Dept. of Education)

Opportunity to learn Helps abolish the achievement gap by making sure students and school staff have what they need to be successful at high levels. In the broadest sense, it means encouraging learning and development by making up the difference between what the most and the least privileged of children have. (NCEA)

Parental involvement The participation of parents in regular, two-way, meaningful communication involving students' academic learning and other school activities. The involvement includes ensuring that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning; that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child. (NCLB)

Parent/school compact A written agreement of shared responsibility that defines the goals and expectations of schools and parents as partners in the effort to improve student achievement. (NCLB)

Performance standards What a student is supposed to be able to do by the end of a particular grade. (NCEA)

Proficiency Mastery or the ability to do something at grade level. (NCEA)

Public engagement The sustained and active involvement of parents, community members, and taxpayers in the improvement of schooling and efforts to reform schools. *(Education Week)*

Public school choice Students who are not limited to a neighborhood school may apply to any district school, including specialized, alternative, and charter schools. School choice without "public" often is used to describe vouchers and privatization. (NCEA)

Schoolwide programs Schoolwide programs use Title I money to support comprehensive school improvement efforts and help all students, particularly low-achieving and at-risk students, meet state standards at particular schools. To qualify as a Title I schoolwide program, at least 40 percent of a school's students must be considered low-income. Schoolwide programs can provide Title I services and support to all of the children in the school, regardless of income level. Schoolwide programs have more flexibility than targeted assistance programs when using Title I funds. For example, schools operating schoolwide programs can combine Title I funds with other federal, state, and local funding to finance a more comprehensive approach to improving student achievement. (PEN)

Scientifically based research	Research that involves the application of rigorous, systemic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to educational activities and programs. (US Dept. of Education)
Sheltered English immersion	Features instruction in English for learners who are at least intermediate speakers of English. Teachers use specific techniques to make the subject matter understandable to those still learning English. (NCEA)
State education agency (SEA)	The agency primarily responsible for the supervision of a state's public elementary and secondary schools. (US Dept. of Education)
Supplemental services	Students from low-income families who are attending schools that have been identified as failing for two years will be eligible to receive outside tutoring or academic assistance. Parents can choose the appropriate services for their child from a list of approved providers. The school district will purchase the services. (US Dept. of Education)
Targeted assistance programs (TAPs)	TAPs operate at schools not eligible for, or those choosing not to run, a schoolwide Title I program. Using Title I money, they provide services only to eligible children identified as having the greatest educational need. School staff determines which services and activities will be provided to which student. Non-Title I students are not eligible to receive Title I services in a TAP school. (PEN)
Title I	Provides federal funding for schools to help students who are behind academically or at risk of falling behind. Funding is based on the number of low-income children in a school, generally those eligible for the free lunch program. Title I is intended to supplement, not replace, state and district funds. Schools receiving Title I monies are supposed to involve parents in deciding how these funds are spent and in reviewing progress. Title I used to be called Chapter One. (NCEA)
Transitional bilingual education	Uses the child's native language only to the extent necessary to help him or her learn English and subject matter. Bilingualism is not a goal, and little or no effort is made to develop or maintain the child's home language. (NCEA)

Selected Resources

As parents and community leaders plan their next steps, identify involvement strategies and activities, and organize citizens for action, they should be aware of the many resources available to them. Numerous organizations have compiled information about NCLB from various perspectives. Whether these organizations comprise educators, civil rights activists, media, researchers, or policymakers, they offer a rich source of information for local leaders to investigate. Listed below is a selected group of such organizations.

General Information

Department of Education Resources and Statistics, www.ed.gov/topics/topics.jsp?&top=Research+%26+Stats

Education Commission of the States, www.ecs.org/

Education Week, www.edweek.org/

Learning First Alliance, www.learningfirst.org

MiddleWeb, www.middleweb.com

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA02/

US Department of Education, www.ed.gov/

Washington State Department of Education, NCLB Links and Resources, www.k12.wa.us/ESEA/default.asp

Business Partnerships

The Business Roundtable, *Using the No Child Left Behind Act to Improve Schools in Your State: A Tool Kit for Business Leaders*, www.brtable.org/toolkit/toolkit.html

Civil Rights Organizations

Children's Defense Fund, www.childrensdefense.org

Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, www.lawyerscomm.org

NAACP, www.naacp.org

National Urban League, www.nul.org

US Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, www.ed.gov/offices/OCR/

Community and Parental Involvement Resources

ACORN, *Parents Left Behind: A Study of State, Federal and School District Implementation of No Child Left Behind*, www.acorn.org/acorn10/betterschools/reports.htm

Alliance for Excellent Education, www.all4ed.org

The Center for Education Reform, www.edreform.com/parents.htm

Communities In Schools, www.cisnet.org

Institute for Responsive Education, www.responsiveeducation.org

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, www.ncpie.org/

National Network of Partnership Schools, www.partnershipschools.org

National Parent Information Network, www.npin.org

National PTA, www.pta.org/

Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, www.prichardcommittee.org

Public Conversations Project, www.publicconversations.org

Study Circles, www.studycircles.org

Educational Organizations

American Association of School Administrators, www.aasa.org/government_relations/esea/

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, www.ascd.org

Council of Chief State School Officers, www.ccsso.org

The Education Trust, www.edtrust.org

Institute for Educational Leadership, www.iel.org

National Association of Elementary School Principals, www.naesp.org

National Association of School Psychologists, www.naspweb.org

National Association of Secondary School Principals, www.nassp.org

National Association of State Boards of Education, www.nasbe.org/

National Coalition of Education Activists, www.nceaonline.org

National Education Association, www.nea.org

The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform, www.mgforum.org

National School Boards Association, www.nsba.org

Public Education Network, www.PublicEducation.org

Education Policy Resources

Center on Education Policy, www.ctredpol.org/

Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington, www.depts.washington.edu/ctpmail/index.html

Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, www.cpre.org

National Conference of State Legislatures, www.ncsl.org/programs/educ/TOverV.htm

National Governors Association, www.nga.org/center/topics/1,1188,C_CENTER_ISSUE^D_401,00.html

Public Agenda, www.publicagenda.org

English Language Learners

Hispanic Scholarship Fund Institute, www.hsfi.org

Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, www.maldef.org

National Association for Bilingual Education, www.nabe.org

National Council of La Raza, www.nclr.org

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, www.tesol.org

Research Resources

National Center for Education Statistics, www.nces.ed.gov

National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing, www.cse.ucla.edu/

National Education Knowledge Industry Association, www.nekia.org

North Central Regional Education Laboratory, www.ncrel.org/info/quality/

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, www.sedl.org

Special Education and Children with Disabilities

Council for Exceptional Children, www.cec.sped.org

Family and Advocates Partnership for Education, www.fape.org

The National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc., www.nasdse.org/

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, www.nichcy.org

State Funding Resources

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, www.cbpp.org

Committee for Education Funding, www.cef.org

The Finance Project, www.financeproject.org

National Center for Education Statistics, www.nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=66

National Education Association, www.nea.org/lac/fy03edfunding/

Teacher Quality Resources

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, www.aacte.org

American Federation of Teachers, www.aft.org/edissues/teacherquality/Index.htm

Center for Future of Teaching and Learning, www.cftl.org

Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence, www.crede.ucsc.edu

Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, www.ccsso.org/intasc.html

National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, www.nasdtec.org/

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, www.nbpts.org

National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching, www.tc.columbia.edu/~ncrest/

National Commission for Teaching and America's Future, www.nctaf.org/

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, www.ncate.org

The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, Harvard University, Graduate School of Education, www.gse.harvard.edu/~ngt/

Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, www.teachingquality.org/

The Standards-Based Teacher Education Project, Council for Basic Education, www.c-b-e.org/teachered/step.htm

Teacher Advancement Program, Milken Family Foundation, www.mff.org/tap/tap.taf

Title II Technical Assistance, US Department of Education, www.title2.org

Youth Engagement Resources

Activism 2000 Project, www.youthactivism.com/

At the Table, www.atthetable.org

Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth, www.ccfy.org/

Connect for Kids, www.connectforkids.org/

DoSomething.org, www.dosomething.org

Forum for Youth Investment, www.forumforyouthinvestment.org

Global Youth Action Network, www.youthlink.org

Good Schools Pennsylvania, www.goodschoolspa.org

Kids Voting USA, www.kidsvotingusa.org

Recognizing Youth as Resources, www.ryar.org

StudentInvolvement.net, http://studentinvolvement.net/

Student Voices, http://student-voices.org

What Kids Can Do, www.whatkidscando.org

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PUBLIC EDUCATION NETWORK

Public Education Network (PEN) is a national organization of local education funds (LEFs) and individuals working to improve public schools and build citizen support for quality public education in low-income communities across the nation.

PEN believes public engagement is the oft-missing ingredient in school reform, and that the level of public involvement ultimately determines the quality of education provided by public schools. Its mission, therefore, is to build public demand and mobilize resources for quality public education through a national constituency of organizations and individuals.

PEN and its LEF members seek to bring the community voice into the debate on quality public education in the firm belief that an active, vocal constituency will ensure every child, in every community, a quality public education. PEN members work on behalf of almost 11 million students in more than 1200 school districts.

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"An invaluable tool for citizens who want to make a difference in their communities."
— David Hornbeck, Chairman, Board of Directors, Public Education Network

"With this Guide, the Public Education Network has provided a much-needed and valuable tool to help parent and community leaders navigate the new *No Child Left Behind* education legislation. PEN continues to serve as an excellent resource for all those who want to make the words 'Leave No Child Behind' a well funded, well implemented reality for every child in our public schools."
— Marian Wright Edelman, President, Children's Defense Fund

"Parents and their communities need to be fully informed about this law and its impact on their children's schools."
— Paul D. Houston, Executive Director, American Association of School Administrators

"A comprehensive reference guide that every community and parent leader must have in using NCLB to create strong partnerships with schools."
— Warren Simmons, Executive Director, The Annenberg Institute for School Reform

"The Public Education Network has once again met the challenge of translating dense federal directives into a comprehensive and useful array of actions for parents and community based organizations."
— Joy Dryfoos, Nationally Recognized Community Consultant and Author on Full Service Schools

"America's schools entered a new world for parent engagement with state standards, accountability and testing. Student achievement data pushes public and parent accountability to increase just like educators' accountability. *No Child Left Behind* takes these opportunities for parents to the next, much higher level. PEN's guide will be indispensable to make NCLB work for parents the way it's supposed to."
— Robert F. Sexton, Executive Director, Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence

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